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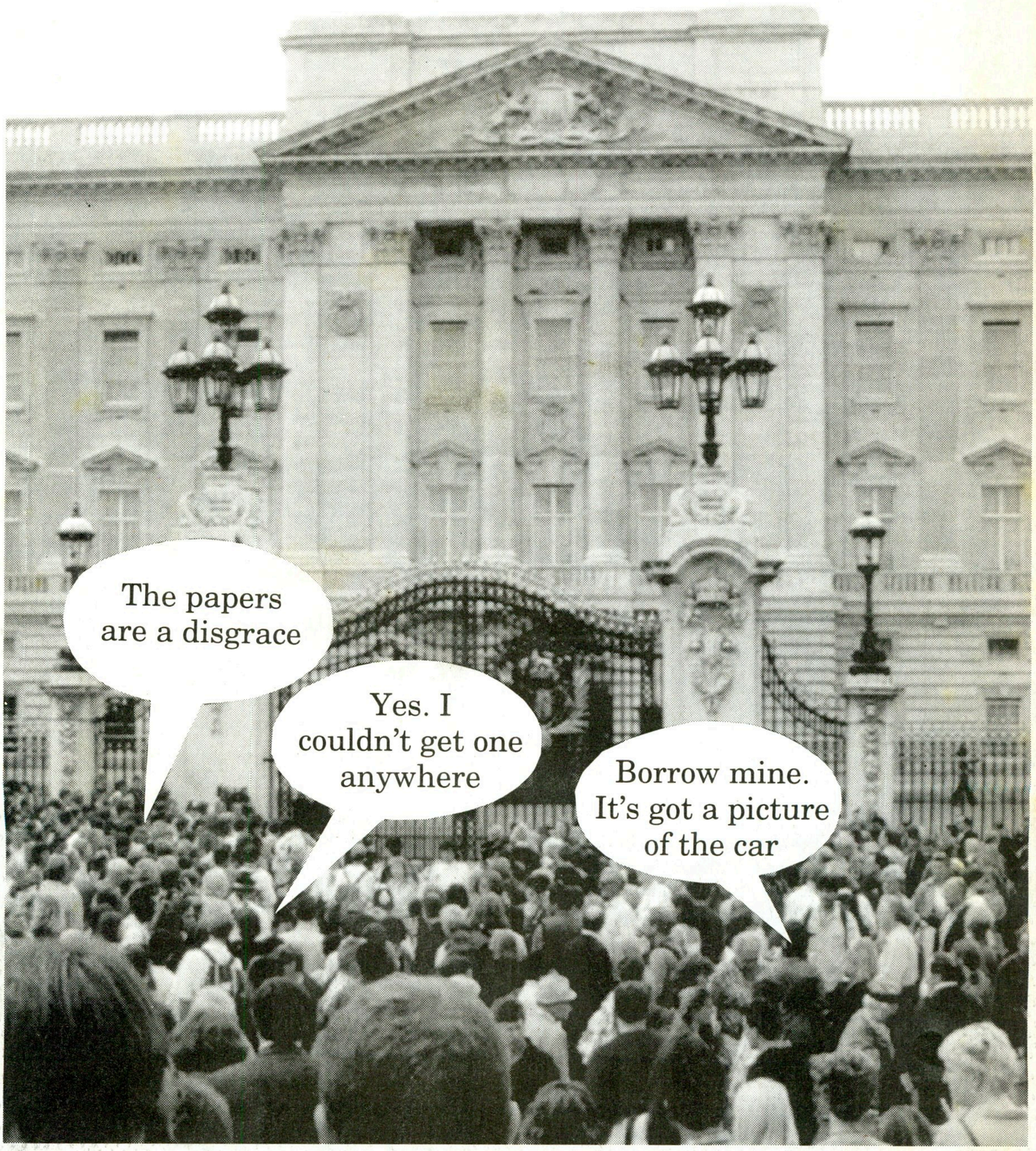

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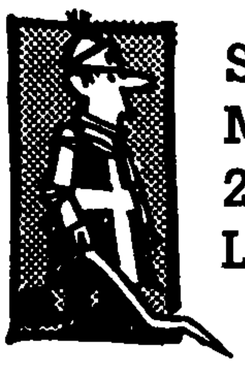

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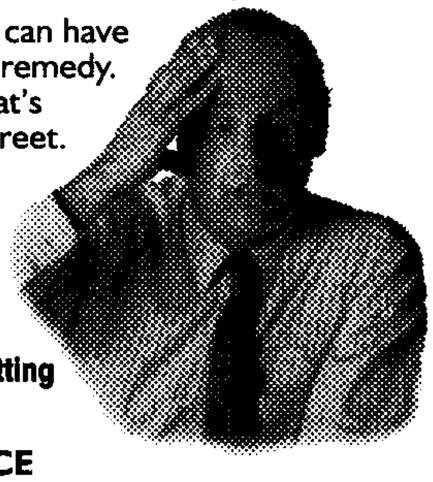

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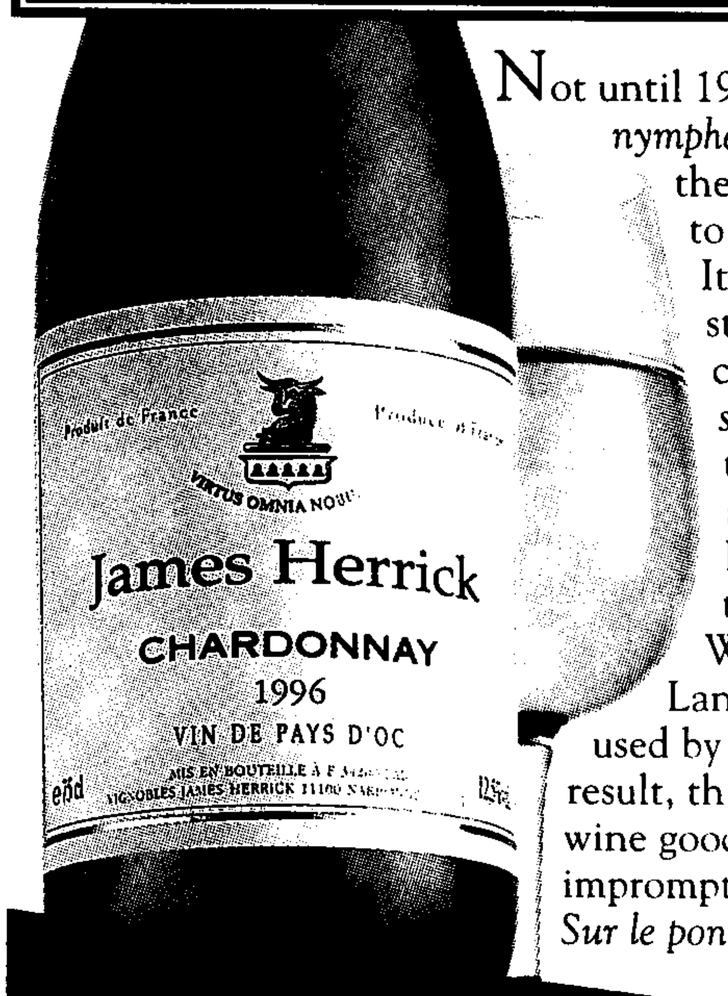

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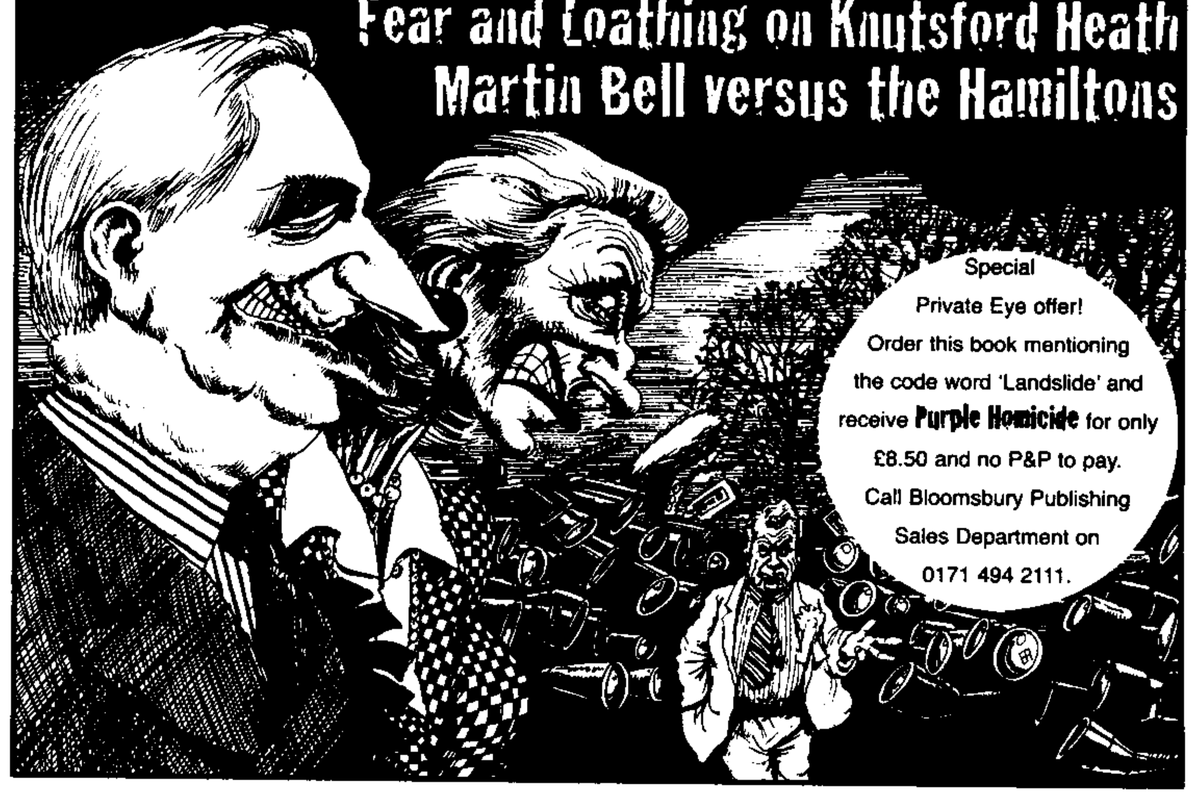
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Gnome

The Late Princess Diana

An Apology

IN recent weeks (not to mention the last ten years) we at the Daily Gnome, in common with all other newspapers, may have inadvertently conveyed the impression that the late Princess of Wales was in some way a neurotic, irresponsible and manipulative troublemaker who had repeatedly meddled in political matters that did not concern her and personally embarrassed Her Majesty The Queen by her Mediterranean love-romps with the son of a discredited Egyptian businessman.

We now realise as of Sunday morning that the Princess of Hearts was in fact the most saintly woman who has ever lived, who, with her charitable activities, brought hope and succour to hundreds and millions of people all over the world.

We would like to express our sincere and deepest hypocrisy to all our readers on this tragic day and hope and pray that they will carry on buying our paper notwithstanding.

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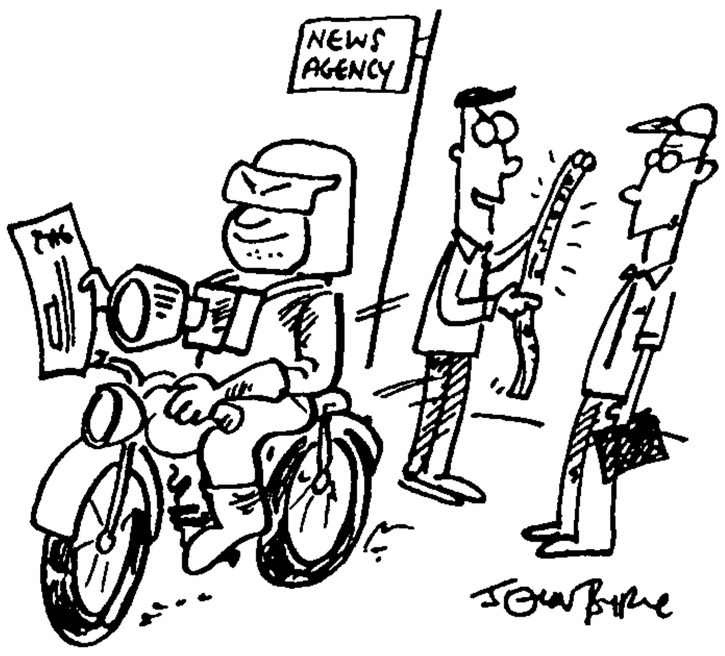

"He's made a killing on these pictures"

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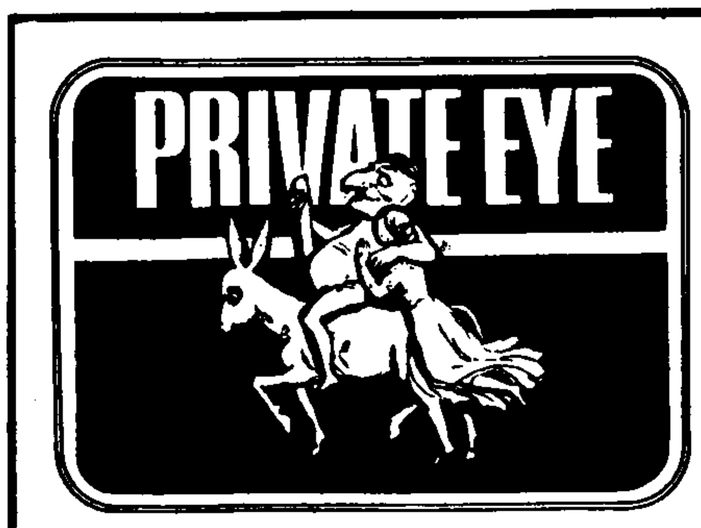

COLOUR SECTION

SIR David Keene, the barrister who so generously lent his French house to the Blairs for their holiday, has been described as an old friend of the couple who shared the same chambers as Cherie.

Rather less attention has been paid to the fact that he is a High Court judge — and that next month he will be presiding over a very sensitive political case, when he and two other judges consider Lady Porter's appeal in the Westminster gerrymandering affair.

By way of analogy, imagine what would have happened if, during the mid-1980s, Margaret Thatcher had gone on holiday with a High Court judge who was about to hear a controversial lawsuit involving Arthur Scargill. Would there have been a fuss? Undoubtedly.

In the happy-clappy era of New Labour, however, not even the Tories have raised an eyebrow.

ARE right-wing malcontents in the Foreign Office trying to undermine Robin Cook? Following the *Eye*'s suggestion that they deliberately leaked the story of his affair with Gaynor Regan, further evidence has emerged that some mandarins are none too pleased by his interest in such un-FOish concepts as human rights.

Cook was recently asked to sign a letter, written by civil servants on his behalf, replying to a Labour colleague who had complained about British arms sales to Indonesia. Happening to glance at the text, he noticed the following: "I hope in conclusion you can agree with me that the new government's policy is complete bollocks."

Cook ringed the offending paragraph and scribbled the immortal words: "Surely some mistake?"

THE official persecution of Sara Keays, regularly chronicled in the *Eye*, will resume next month when the Official Solicitor asks the High Court for "further directions" on the gagging orders obtained against Keays by her former lover, Lord Parkinson.

Although the new law term begins on 1 October, the hearing has been set down for 20 October. Why the delay? A figure as grand as the Official Solicitor could certainly insist on having his case put at the top of the list if he wished.

Oddly enough, this year's Conservative Party conference will take place at Blackpool between the 7th and 10th of October — and Lord Parkinson, in his new role as party chairman, will be prominently involved.

Cynical observers may wonder if the High Court hearing was deliberately postponed until the conference was safely over, to avoid upstaging or embarrassing Parkinson during his triumphant comeback gig at Blackpool. They should dismiss all such unworthy suspicions from their minds forthwith. It is nothing more than a happy coincidence.

MORE revelations about Cecil Parkinson's chequered business career.

The last *Eye* revealed that Parkinson's directorships included firms which had been notable only for large losses and embarrassing gaffes. One of these was Starmin, a construction group which Parky joined as deputy chairman in 1992. Only a year earlier slimy Cecil had been the Tories' transport secretary. He, like Thatcher, was keen on the "great car economy". How convenient, then, to go and work for Starmin, whose quarrying works provide roadstone for, er, roads.

ALLEGATIONS that suspended Renfrewshire West MP Tommy Graham smeared the late MP Gordon McMaster took a back seat when the liquidator investigating FCB Enterprise Security in scandal-hit Paisley claimed that more than £1.6m may have gone missing during the company's seven years of trading.

New Labour has suspended two former directors of FCB, one-time Renfrew councillor Olga Clayton and serving member Harry Revie. Both were nominated as directors of the company by the council after FCB was set up using local authority grants and Scottish office money. Its purpose was to create jobs in the deprived area of Ferguslie Park.

FCB's accountant Colin Hastings says he first contacted the crown office and the police seven months ago detailing how £320,000 couldn't be accounted for, but that both failed to act on his evidence of massive fraud at FCB during the firm's final 14 months in operation.

Eye 878 highlighted allegations concerning FCB, including:

- Ferguslie Park Community Holdings (FPCH), the parent company of FCB, had paid no rent for more than four years to Renfrew's Labour council in lieu of its customised £400,000 building.
- £205,586 was paid to FCB in 1994/5 for £146,000 of council security contracts — £60,000 more than the contract values.
- FCB had been given £1.3m worth of contracts by the council — for most of which no tender was submitted.

Both suspended Labour party members, Clayton and Revie, believe the crown office investigation into FCB will clear their names and both deny vehemently any wrongdoing.

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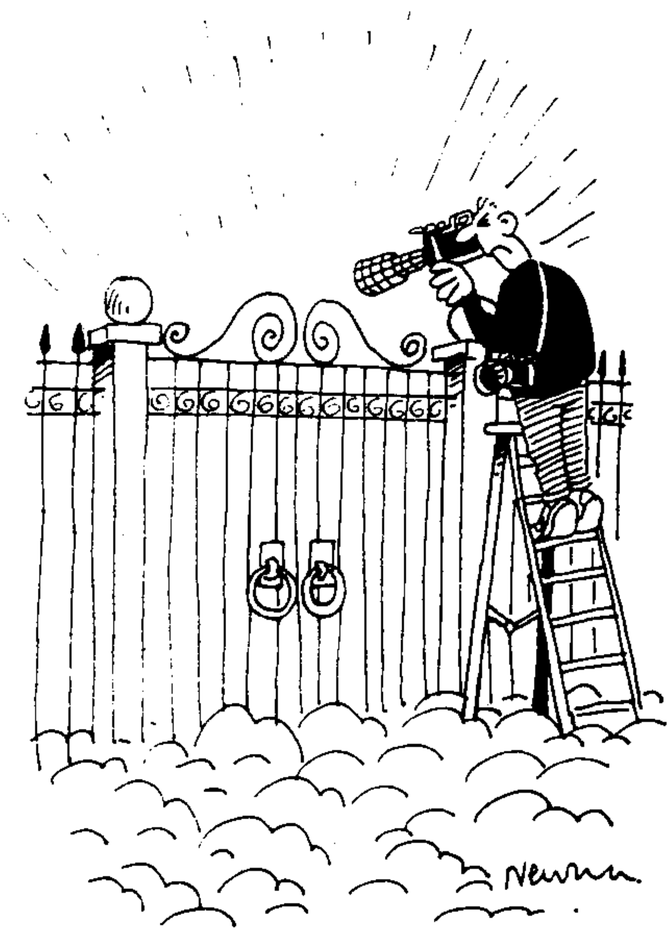


THE MOURNING PAPERS

Coverage of Princess Diana's death brought out all the finest qualities of the British press, including:

BAD TIMING...

"Troubled Prince William will today demand that his mother Princess Diana dump her playboy lover, Harrods heir Dodi Al-Fayed."
— Two-page "exclusive" by *News of the World* royal editor Clive Goodman, published hours after the car crash.

"Many of us feel that there is something missing from our lives today... The problem extends to some of the cleverest, wealthiest and most attractive people in the land — among them Princess Diana."
— Oliver James attempting "a daring royal psycho-analysis" in the *Sunday Times* News Review as the front page of the main paper reports her death.

"She [Diana] seems to relish her role as a martyr. God help her if she ever finds happiness — it would make her miserable."
— Petronella Wyatt, *Express on Sunday*, 31 Aug.

"Princess Diana's press relations are now clearly established. Any publicity is good publicity... I'm told she and Dodi are made for each other, both having more brass than brains."
— Bernard Ingham, *Express on Sunday*, 31 Aug.

"Just when Diana began to believe that her current romance with likeable playboy Dodi Fayed had wiped out her past liaisons, a new tape recording is doing the rounds of Belgravia dinner parties. And this one is hot, hot, hot! Labelled Squidgygate II, the tape is of a completely different conversation the Princess had with her sometime beau James Gilbey... I must remember to take it up with Diana next time we find ourselves on adjacent running machines at our West London gym."
— Chris Hutchins celebrates another privacy intrusion, *Sunday Mirror*, 31 Aug.

"It's a pity Gucci don't make designer face zips, then when Princess Diana was on the verge of opening her ill-informed mouth and causing an international incident (an increasingly frequent occurrence these days) she could just zip her trap shut... The Princess, I fear, suffers from the 'Open Gob Before Brain Engages' syndrome — a condition which afflicts the trivial and the brain dead."
— The deeply untrivial Carole Malone, *Sunday Mirror*, 31 Aug.

"Diana has said publicly that the Tories were hopeless... It always slightly amazes me how the press picks up on stuff like this as if it were compelling genius insight of Aristotelian wisdom and Shavian wit, as opposed to the witterings of a woman who, if her IQ were five points lower, would have to be watered daily."
— The Shavian wit of "Mrs Blair's Diary", the *Observer*, 31 Aug.

HUMBUG...

"The sight of a paunchy playboy groping a scantily-dressed Diana must appal and humiliate Prince William... As the mother of two young sons she ought to have more decorum and sense. She has for many years criticised Prince Charles for being a distant, undemonstrative father. In the long run he's been the more responsible parent and certainly inflicted less damage, anguish and hurt."
— Lynda Lee-Potter, *Daily Mail*, 27 Aug.

"Throughout their childhood she gave her sons endless loving cuddles... She adored her children."
— Lynda Lee-Potter, *Daily Mail*, 1 Sep.

STATEMENTS OF THE OBVIOUS...

"How must Charles, Prince of Wales be feeling in the days after the tragic death of Diana?... Prince Charles's first feelings, like most people's, will be shock, followed by sadness... And then his concern will be for his children..."
— Sarah Bradford, "royal biographer", *Daily Mail*.

"However the Prince of Wales broke the news to his sons, his words will inevitably have started the grief response."
— Thomas "A Doctor Writes" Stuttaford, *Times*.

"Things will never be the same again."
— Suzanne Moore, *Independent*.

"One thing is certain in the aftershock of the death of Diana, and that will be her lasting impact on the royal family."
— Henry Porter, *Guardian*.

"It is probably too early to get the whole thing into perspective. But one thing is clear: You cannot be a sentient human being and not feel grief and horror at Diana's death."
— Ben Pimlott, *Guardian*.

"It could all have been so different."
— Lynda Lee-Potter, *Daily Mail*.

AVOIDING THE QUESTION...

"There are a number of unanswered questions about the exact behaviour of French photographers and why Diana's car was going at 100mph in a 30mph limit... But today is not the time to analyse or discuss these important issues."
— Editorial, *Mirror*.

"The question of privacy will not go away for the British press — nor, moreover, for the media as a whole... But these are issues for another day."
— Editorial, *Daily Mail*.

"Who is to blame? Why do we feel so great a sense of loss? What will be the implications?... Such problems are for tomorrow, not today."
— Ben Pimlott, *Express*.

RAMPANT EGOS...

"She knew that whatever I said and whatever I might write it would always be what I thought, and sometimes, necessarily, it would be critical. So she trusted me and revealed herself constantly..."
— Richard Kay, *Daily Mail*.

"Some of us — myself included — were fortunate enough to meet her..."
— Jane Moore, Woman's editor of the *Sun*.

"To meet her, to talk to her, was to enjoy the company of a woman whose charisma was quite extraordinary... I remember how at lunch one day she suddenly stopped talking as her eyes glazed and her mind turned in on itself. It only lasted for a moment but it was disquieting while it lasted. It provided a disconcerting glimpse into the insecurities with which she was never truly able to come to terms."
— Ross Benson, the *Express*, unaware that Di's eyes might have been glazing over due to his sparkling company.

"After her divorce Diana felt able to invite to lunch in Kensington Palace various friends and advisers. I was one who fell into that category."
— Anthony Holden, *Express*.

"Diana, Princess of Wales, is dead. I can't believe I've written those words, but as I do so I am crying... She was not a friend as such. Our relationship was just professional. But it went a lot deeper than this... Our lives were inextricably intertwined."
— James Whitaker, *Mirror*.

"Diana, the most famous face of the century. Diana, the woman whom [*sic*] over 17 years had become a friend."
— Kent Gavin, chief photographer of the *Mirror*.

"Everyone talked about Diana's kindness... Perhaps it's a little soon but I was sad no one mentioned what an amusing character she was, too. At a small private lunch I attended..."
— Peter McKay airs his "forthright views", *Daily Mail*.

"I had lunch at Kensington Palace after she became semi-detached, in the early Nineties. It was wildly exciting..."
— Vicki Woods, *Guardian*.

"The House of Windsor has never really recovered from the revelations in Andrew Morton's seminal book *Diana, Her True Story*, which I serialised in the *Sunday Times* in 1992."
— Andrew Neill, *Guardian*.

...AND CLICHES GALORE

"A Nation Weeps for its Queen of Hearts."
— Headline, *Express*.

"Queen of All Our Hearts."
— Headline, *Sun*.

"Like a candle in the wind, the flame that burned so bright will burn no more."
— Editorial, *Sun*.

"Frailty, the apparent brave frailty of a candle in the wind, was always Diana's supreme public quality."
— John Ezard, *Guardian*.

"There, in a stark, concrete underpass, lie the tangled remains of a Mercedes limousine. That so glamorous a life should be ended in such a mundane place is the greatest of ironies. Yet it was here, beneath the streets of Paris, that a light to millions around the world was extinguished."
— Jack Gee and John Coles, *Express*.

"A beacon of light has been extinguished."
— Lady Thatcher, *Sun*.

"A radiant, potently attractive light has been snuffed out, leaving us stunned and grieving."
— Editorial, *Express*.

"A comet streaked across the sky of public life and entranced the world."
— Simon Jenkins, *Times*.

"She is the brightest star in the sky tonight."
— Lord Archer, *Sun*.

"A bright star has suddenly been blotted out."
— Lord Hurd, *Express*.

"She was 'a gem of purest ray serene'."
— Paul Johnson, *Daily Mail*.

"It is a light which we will never see again."
— Brian Reade, *Mirror*.

"She was the butterfly who shone with the light of glamour which illuminated all our lives."
— Ross Benson, *Express*.

"I'll always remember where I was when Diana died..."

Street Of Shame

DAVID "Rommel" Montgomery has expressed his fury at the snub to his Academy of Excellence in customary fashion: last Saturday he rang *Sindie* editor Rosie Boycott and ordered her to fire the head of the paper's NUJ chapel, Barbara Gunnell.

Since Gunnell is also an assistant editor in charge of features, and there are no spare staff who could take over her job at short notice, the wily Boycott waited until 4.45pm — when Gunnell has finished the feature pages — before summoning her to the gallows. She pretended that the abrupt execution was part of a "restructuring" exercise rather than a petty act of revenge.

"Can I at least finish my cigarette?" the shaken hackette asked her editor. The answer was no: she was ordered out of the building forthwith. Indignant hacks, too cowed to go on strike, lodged the only protest they could — by inserting this photo in the "News in Brief" column, along with a curiously-worded caption…

Independent journalists wear prison uniforms at a rally attended by 2,000 people on the streets of Minsk, Belarus, yesterday in support of press freedom

MORE on Brian Whitaker, managing editor of the *Guardian*, who is determined to kick some ass among the paper's wet lefties — especially freelances who are less likely to kick back.

Eye 930 recorded that a *pro forma* letter had been circulated to regular freelances demanding that the copyright of articles published in the paper be surrendered to the *Grauniad*. Whitaker admitted that "I haven't gone for the famous, but the not-so-famous can get lost."

One freelance, Alastair McQueen, had this policy driven home after filing a news story to the *Graun*. Several weeks after it had been published he still hadn't been paid. When he demanded the dosh he was sent the Whitaker letter, which he promptly threw in the bin. Still he wasn't paid. He was eventually referred to Sonja Singleton, "Sales Manager News Services", who told him he must sign it. After threats to take the paper to court he eventually received a letter from la Singleton and payment — five months after writing the story.

Her letter warned darkly: "Please note that without the letter of assignment we will be unable to accept any further work submitted by you. To this effect we have notified our commissioning editors accordingly."

ONE HUNDRED hacks and clerical staff are facing the axe at Miller Freeman, the business magazine arm of United News and Media, the group which owns the *Express*.

The management, which does not recognise trade unions, is refusing to discuss its plans with the workforce in Woolwich, south London.

The NUJ and GMPU unions have appealed for help to the local MP, Nick Raynsford, minister with responsibility for London under deputy prime minister John Prescott.

No doubt Mr Prescott will have a word on the workers' behalf with his cabinet colleague, trade secretary Margaret Beckett, whose special adviser is Labour peer and "socialist" millionaire Lord "Alco" Hollick — boss of union-busting United News and Media.

GRAUNIAD columnist Mark Lawson savaged the rail service offered on the Virgin West Coast line in a recent article. The carriages remained "juddering dust traps" and the catering was "stalely the same".

Virgin boss Richard Branson retaliated with a letter to the editor, pointing out that Virgin had only "been running the service for 15 weeks" and "change does not happen overnight".

Furthermore, wrote the tycoon, the *Guardian* should be sympathetic to his difficulties: after all, they had taken over the *Observer* two-and-a-half years ago and the public still hadn't seen any improvement!

Unfortunately the subs were forced to cut the last point for reasons of space.

LONG-SUFFERING hacks at the *Financial Times*, still puzzling over the huge wallcharts of gobbledegook displayed throughout the building on the orders of chief executive Stephen "Slasher" Hill, may be consoled to learn that they are not the only victims.

He produced similar posters a few years ago, while he was busily "downsizing" newspapers in Oxford. Then, as now, one of the many boxes proclaimed the message "Right first time".

Alas, he was unable to take his own advice: a large number of errors in the chart required extensive — and expensive — surgery before its reappearance in a second edition.

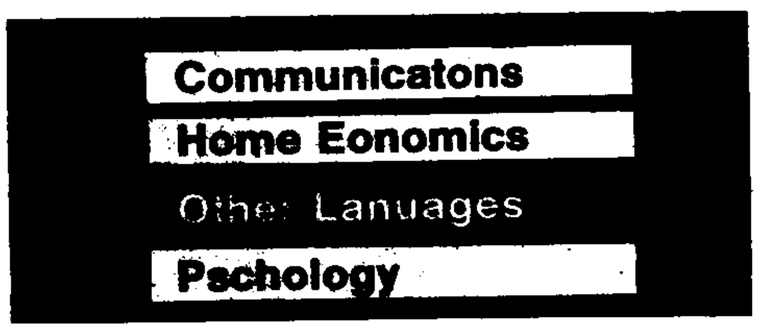
JUST FANCY THAT!

"Boys take the honours in record A-level passes."
— headline in *The Times*, Friday, 15 August, 1997.

"Girls top of the class at A-levels."
— headline in the *Daily Telegraph*, Friday, 15 August, 1997.

"A-MINUS for exams," screamed the *Mirror*'s headline on its A-level results story. "Fewer get top grade in English."

The rag then printed a results table by subject, including the following:



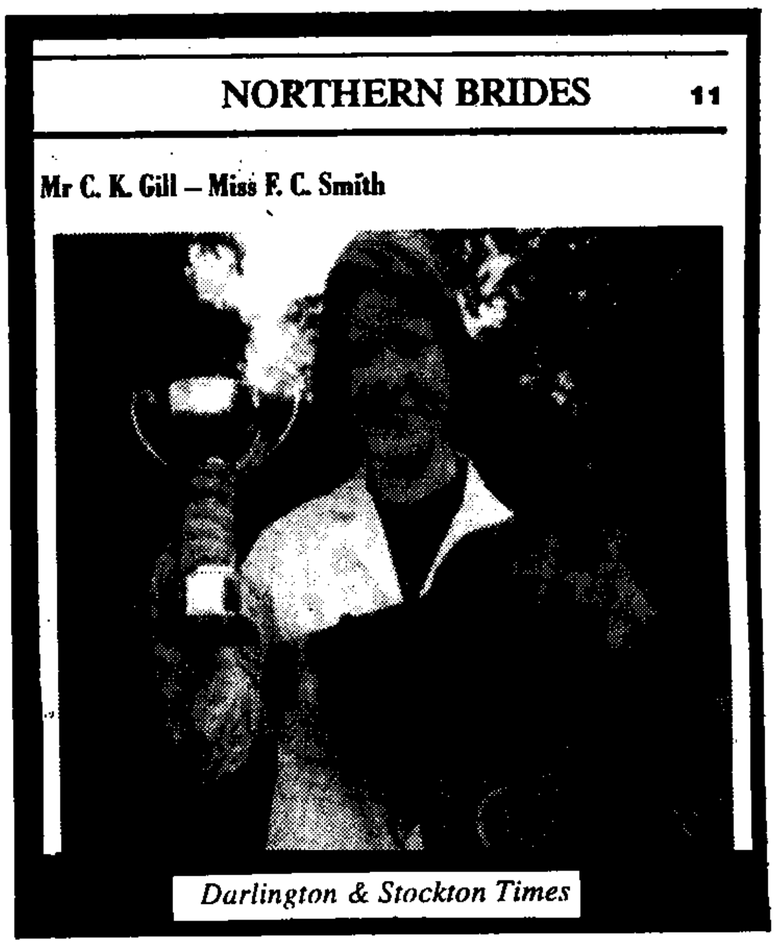
THOUGH MI5 has been keeping tabs on Victoria Brittain, deputy foreign editor of the *Guardian*, there was a far more prosaic explanation when the paper's editor, Alan Rusbridger, returned from his hols in America and found his lap-top computer missing.

Rusbridger's home in Highbury, north London, had simply been visited by a conventional burglar, and Inspector Knacker from Holloway police station was quickly on the job. A tip-off led to a local house where Rusbridger's property was found amid a stash from several recently burgled homes.

Rusbridger gushed with praise for Knacker's competence, particularly when he found that his lap-top would also be returned. Holloway police hope their small success will earn them better coverage in the *Graun* than that enjoyed by their neighbouring force, Stoke Newington.

THE "Word of Mouth" column in the Independent of 28 August had a hot story: Sue Gee, a part-time lecturer, has won the £5,000 Romantic Novel of the Year award.

It had taken this news only four months to reach Canary Wharf from the Cafe Royal, where the award lunch was held in April.



STRAIT-LACED *Sun* editor Stuart Higgins was furious when he spotted an ad for Wickes fences in the first edition on 22 August which graphically showed a dog defecating on a lawn.

He immediately ordered the offending wriggly turd to be painted out before later editions went to press.

As one gnarled old hack was heard to growl: "We've already got enough crap in the paper, without this."

DOMINIC LAWSON, extremely popular editor of the *Sunday Torygraph*, who was cheered when he left the building on holiday, has further enhanced his reputation by ordering his secretary off the premises just as she was about to go home on a Friday night.

No explanation was given for the abrupt sacking. A few hours earlier Lawson had apparently been searching for a pretext when he asked newsdesk hacks if they had any complaints about her. Alas for him, they had none. But he fired her anyway.

His unlucky victim, who was not only a highly competent PA but also a former Page Three girl, was shattered since she was known in the office as someone who actually *defended* Lawson behind his back.

O·B·N

ROBIN MARLAR gives readers the benefit of his views on cricket each week in the *Sunday Times* (prop. R. Murdoch).

His offering celebrating England's victory over Australia at the Oval noted that the Aussies want England to surrender the Ashes urn, which has always resided at Lord's.

This, according to Marlar, would amount to "antipodean burglary". Luckily he has has a better idea: "They should substitute some splendiferous silverware to be competed for, series by series. The Murdoch Cup, perhaps?"

"Ambulance service? There's about to be an accident on the M4 because I'm using my mobile phone"

TONY BLAIR is to be the "fraternal guest" at this year's TUC Congress. His aides will be hoping for a warmer reception than the Dear Leader received last time around.

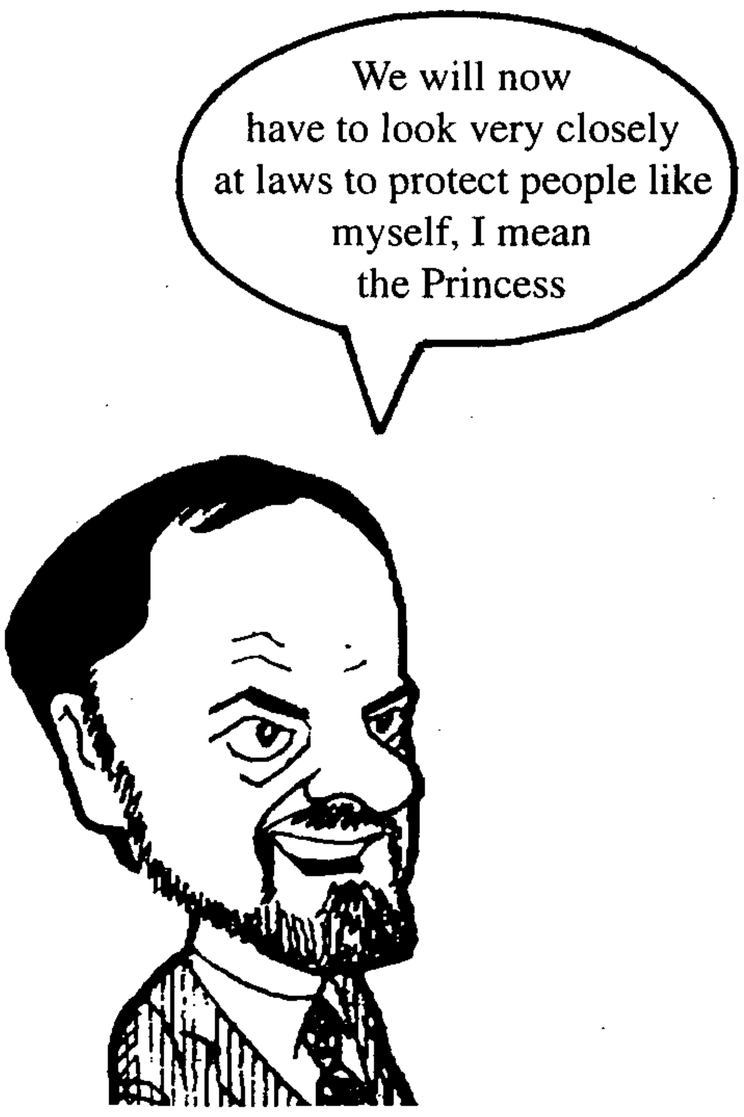
Much depends on whether the brothers get what they were promised in Labour's election manifesto, and a promise for which they have paid for handsomely over the years — rights to union recognition withdrawn by the evil Thatch. The Dear Leader would rather the brothers sat down with the bosses over at the CBI and reached a voluntary agreement, but this will not wash. The brothers will tell Blair at a private meeting that if he wants an easy ride at the Labour Conference in Brighton at the end of September, it is delivery time.

THOSE Labour MPs who would like to see Peter Mandelson come a cropper — ie almost all of them — have greatly enjoyed his disastrous stint as stand-in prime minister. They are confidently predicting that he will soon be banished by Blair to some obscure department of state, never to be heard of again.

As he has few supporters in the Cabinet, Mandy depends entirely on Blair for his position. But the received wisdom in Fleet Street is that this should be more than enough to protect him, since he and the PM are inseparable chums who have an almost telepathic understanding.

Not necessarily so. When the ultra-loyal Fabian Society executive met recently to appoint a new general secretary — to fill the vacancy left by Stephen Twigg's unexpected election as MP for Enfield — they naturally sought guidance from the leadership. Blair's office let it be known that he favoured Ian Corfield, a bright young chap with a dangerously Old Labour commitment to state education; but Mandelson lobbied vigorously for BBC producer Gareth Butler, who had the impressive distinction of not even belonging to the Fabian Society.

Utterly bewildered by these conflicting signals, the hapless Fabians went completely off-message and gave the job to someone else, one Michael Jacobs.



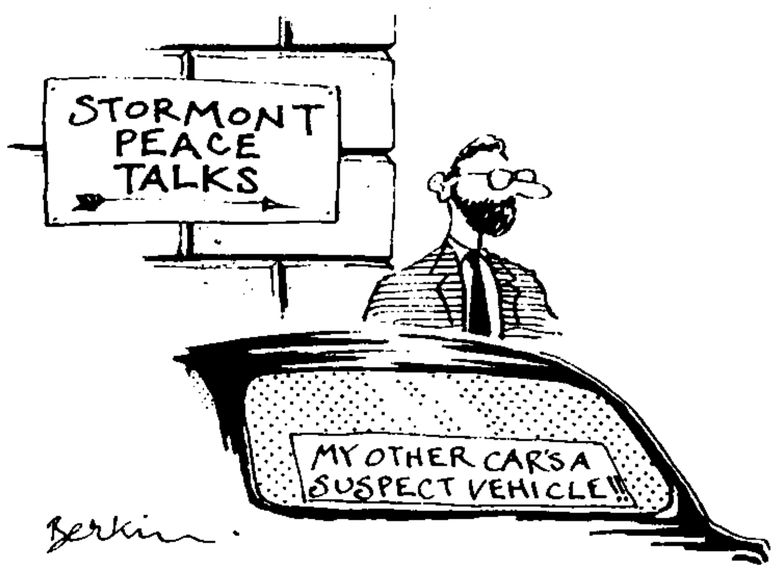
AGEING Trot beardies who spent much of the 1960s getting stoned and laid while deriving occasional exercise from chucking rocks at cops in Grosvenor Square, are justifiably peeved that Jack Straw, rather than they, was the subject of a fat MI5 file.

Despite Jack's helmanship of the National Union of Students in the 1970s, few can recall him doing anything remotely lefty. So what now of the home secretary's earlier support for his predecessor Michael Howard's Police Bill, which promised the "reformed" security services and police even more freedom to burgle and bug? Jack's insistence that civil liberties were not in any way threatened begins to look a little threadbare now that the home secretary can read a file devoted to himself headed "subversive".

ODD that the same unit of MI5 should have targeted both Peter Mandelson — that well known Bolshevik — and the *Guardian*'s own Deirdre Spart, Victoria Brittain, high-born and dedicated revolutionist.

Mandelson, a bearer of grudges, has a particular gripe against the *Grauniad* and what he calls the troika of deputy editor Georgina Henry, labour editor Seumas Milne and sometime editor of the foreign pages Victoria Brittan, whom Mandelson once described as "Stalin's fragrant niece".

Mandy blames the troika for poisoning the well of Labour activists against him. He thinks of them as the enemy within. Just like MI5 once thought of him.



MONTSERRAT continues to send shock waves around Whitehall, but one minister in particular has so far escaped much of the falling debris.

Step forward, George Foulkes, minister for tired and emotional affairs, whose doom-laden warnings to islanders were at odds with scientific reports on the likely effect of further volcanic eruptions in the northern, still-inhabited part of the island, and encouraged many to believe that evacuation was the only option.

Foulkes, who had an unfortunate altercation with a policeman after a reception organised by the Scotch Whisky Association some years ago, may yet have to run the gauntlet of furious Montserratians during his "fact finding" mission to the island.

AFTER suspending Tommy Graham MP for allegedly blackguarding the late Gordon McMaster, Labour whips let it be known that they had been keeping a close and suspicious eye on Graham for some time.

This seems unlikely. As recently as 30 June, Graham joined a select group of Labour MPs — led by immigration minister Mike O'Brien — on a high-powered jaunt to Berlin organised by the Oxford Forum. The three-day trip included meetings with the President of the Bundestag and socialist leader Klaus Kinkel.

The Labour delegation was chosen and vetted by Government whips, who would not have picked anyone who wasn't regarded as "one of us".

Stories about Tommy Graham's antics in Paisley had been circulating for ages; and yet, only two months ago, Nick Brown and his fellow-whips thought him just the chap to represent New Labour to the Germans. Why?

LUGUBRIOUS Scottish secretary Donald Dewar, fighting a lone battle to rescue the devolution campaign in Scotland, knows all about Graham's embarrassing antics.

Some years ago a train pulled out of Queen Street station in Glasgow heading for Edinburgh and bearing a phalanx of Scottish Labour MPs to a meeting of the grand committee. Dewar, the dour Presbyterian, and the even more dour and respectable Bruce Millan, a former secretary of state for Scotland, were seated next to the dreaded 20-stone lard mountain.

Though his gut was smaller then, Graham still had a mouth like an ashtray. As the train pulled out through Springburn, he leapt to his feet, pointed to a grassy knoll near the tracks and boomed poetically across the carriage: "See that tree — that's where I first shagged the wife."

Dewar went pink and Millar went grey, the latter soon departing for Brussels as a Euro commissioner, declaring that he couldn't be a fellow traveller with the likes of Tommy Graham.

A BOMB is waiting for Labour MPs after the hols in the form of a coruscating attack by the British Nuclear Tests Veterans Association.

Their *causus belli* is the betrayal of the vets by the new Labour government and the deserting rat John Spellar, Parliamentary Under Secretary of Defence, in particular. The BNTVA's Mrs Sheila Gray has appealed to the New Labour ranks to mutiny.

In 1990 ex-MP Bob Clay launched a Private Member's Bill in support of compensation and recognition of the veterans whose ranks have been decimated by the poisons of nuclear testing. The majority of Labour MPs supported it. Indeed a cursory glance at Hansard shows that nearly every member of today's Cabinet, including Tony Blair, voted for the Bill which was nonetheless filibustered out by the Tories.

Their case is being heard in Strasbourg on the 26 November. The loathsome Spellar (one of life's bullying sergeant majors) has made it clear that New Labour will hold the previous Tory line.

Meanwhile Mrs Gray has sent three dispatches since May to the veterans former champion, Tony Blair. Not one answer has there been.

"Keep your promises, given us over the last 14 years, and show the world you are honourable members," says Mrs Gray. Fat chance!

THE behaviour of armed forces minister Dr John Reid grows ever more bizarre.

Once renowned for his Fenian sympathies — before becoming Neil Kinnock's enforcer-in-chief in the Commons — "Barracks" Reid has taken to referring to the Army as "my boys". He has even suggested to colleagues that they might benefit from a short spell in uniform, perhaps walking in front of advancing tanks on the Chobham ranges. In recent days, "Barracks" has donned flak jacket, à la Heseltine, and has been photographed encouraging recruits to clamber up ropes and fall into ditches.

Last Thursday the BBC's *Newsnight* interviewed him on recruitment problems faced by the armed services, but was later to report Barracks's refusal to participate in a debate on the subject with General Sir Anthony Farrar-Hockley and Major Eric Joyce. The reason? Barracks could not bring himself to sit next to Joyce — who has been suspended indefinitely for writing a Fabian Society pamphlet describing the Army as "class-ridden and out of date".

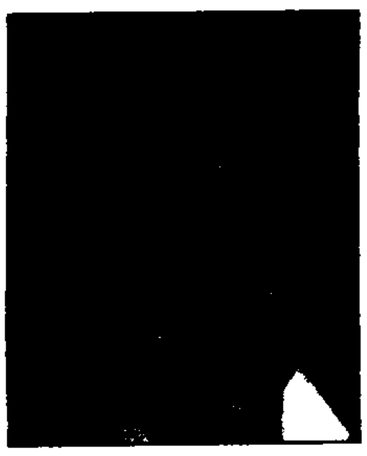
Partii Pracy pod przewodnictwem Tony'ego Blaira udaje się pozyskiwać poparcie środowiska biznesu

wprost (Poland)

THE NEW GIRLS 3:

Ruth Kelly

SEASONED observers schooled in the black arts of New Labour Kremlinology have been taken aback by the decision of Mandy Mandelson's Millbank Command Centre to allow new girl Ruth Kelly, 28, to grace the nation's television screens when matters of national economic importance are debated.



Kelly is not only young, but shows disturbing signs of an intelligence many of her New Labour cheer-leaders so miserably lack. But is it ambition that compels her to defend Chancellor Brown's decision to hand over the power to set interest rates to the Bank of England, or does Kelly trust steady Eddie more than her Chancellor? Nothing may of course be read into Kelly's previous employment as a high-flying economist with the Bank of England, while a good deal may be made of the fact that just weeks after her election to Parliament, Kelly was Brown's choice to replace the troublesome Diane Abbott on the influential Treasury Select Committee. And when Brown is looking for allies to back up his arguments for taking Britain into Monetary Union, he may be able to rely on Kelly, who had responsibility for the Bank's policy towards the Single Currency policy.

While Kelly claims that "John Maynard Keynes inspired me to go into politics", it is unlikely that we will hear much more about her hero's distinctly unfashionable economic theories. Kelly's other political heroes include Tony Blair and Nelson Mandela, yet many of the hacks who worked with her at *The Grauniad* in the early 1990s were somewhat surprised to find that Kelly had been selected to fight the key swing seat of Bolton West, as they had all expected to find safe berths themselves, forgetting that she was married to Labour Party organiser, Derek Gadd, who had the inside track on vacancies. During the election "Gabby Gadd" worked as bag carrier in chief for the putative Cabinet wannabe Tessa Jowell, who was first to announce to a waiting nation the glad tidings that Kelly had given birth to a son. "New Labour, New Baby. Congratulations on another New Labour gain," gushed Jowell and "New Britain" rejoiced.

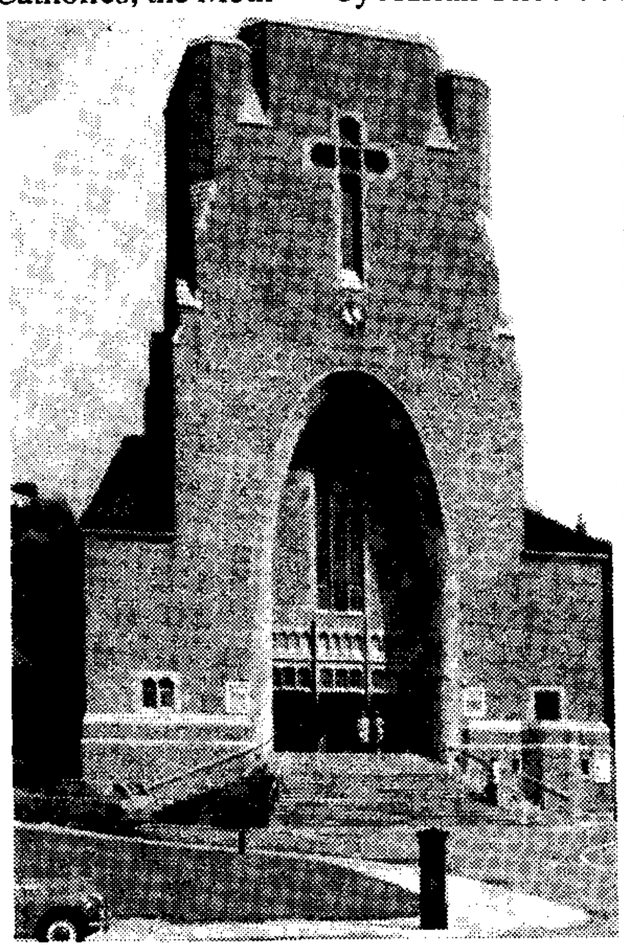
Kelly may yet surprise, since she recently told *The Sun* in uncompromising fashion that she "would like to remembered for putting the radical into the radical centre". Quite what that may mean is a question New Labour's ideology commissars may already be asking themselves.

'Backbiter'

NOOKS and CORNERS

THE completion of Stephen Dykes Bower's tower on Bury St Edmunds Cathedral may be regarded as of no importance (*Eye* 929), but at least the Christian churches are waking up to the fact that the wretched Millennium has Christian significance first and foremost or it has none.

So a commercial company is being set up by the Church of England, the Roman Catholics, the Methodists, the United Reformed Church, the Evangelical Alliance and the Baptists to sell 25 million candles (each with a Millennium Prayer and a fire warning) so that 25 million people can light up for two minutes on 31 December 1999 to celebrate, presumably, the 1999th birthday of Our Lord. The company will be non-profit-making; I just hope the Church Commissioners and other Freemasons have nothing to do with things, otherwise it will undoubtedly lose hundreds of millions of pounds.



Otherwise the Church of England seems set to celebrate the Millennium by spoiling old churches (*Eye* 981) or, even better, by closing them. In Whitby in Yorkshire — the wonderful town where St Hilda held the famous Synod (and where Dracula landed) — it is proposed to close St Ninian's in Baxtergate, a former proprietary chapel which is a sweet little Georgian galleried box with extravagant Anglo-Catholic fittings. Of course, Whitby already has the Parish Church high on the cliff, arguably the most wonderful church in England, and the noble Late Victorian St Hilda's on West Cliff, so St Ninian's is the obvious one to chop. Never mind that it is a lovely building in which a devoted congregation wants to maintain its own tradition of worship — who cares about the Anglo-Catholics now that the happy-clappies are in charge? Besides, on its town centre site, the building would make a fine hamburger bar.

In the Diocese of Cheshire, the parish church of the village of Parkgate is a sandstone former Congregational chapel of 1843 now dedicated to St Thomas. In 1987, planning permission was given for its extension to meet the needs of a growing congregation, but then all the money and effort went to build a new church in the neighbouring village of Little Neston. Times change, so in 1995 Parkgate parish church council decided St Thomas's was beyond repair and should be demolished. It is now a listed building, but all offers of help to repair it have been spurned. This month it has been put up for sale: no doubt it will make a good hamburger bar. And a new church cannot be built as no other site is available. So Parkgate can celebrate the Millennium by having no Anglican church at all.

My picture, however, shows an Anglican church of serious architectural importance and beauty. It is the parish church of St Leonards by the Sea in Sussex, designed in a characteristic modern Gothic by Adrian Gilbert Scott, younger brother of the great Sir Giles. It was built in 1953-61 to replace a building by Decimus Burton blown to bits by a flying bomb in 1944. Inside, the nave is spanned by parabolic arches while an appropriate nautical theme is given by a pulpit made on the shores of Galilee as the prow of a fishing boat, a binnacle-lectern and sea-creatures depicted on the inlaid marble floor. It is all rather charming and very much of its time. And the Diocese of Chichester now hopes to get rid of it.

The problem is the cliff behind, which is moving. When the new church was built, it was proposed to build it nearer the sea, but the War Damage Commission insisted the old foundations were used. So now, in consequence, Adrian Scott's structure is cracking up. Of course, it would be possible to stabilise the cliff and to repair the church, but all that costs money. Never mind that St Leonard's has a flourishing congregation; never mind that the church is a local landmark and a symbol of triumph over the destruction of war; much easier to close it and get rid of it. After all, a poorly-maintained defective structure can't even be sold as a hamburger bar.

Half a century on from the Second World War, the repair of St Leonards Church and the strengthening of the cliff defences would make a suitable Millennium project, but the Diocese of Chichester does not want to get involved with any of that nonsense. Besides, there is probably no money left in the Lottery purse — the Arts Council has just been told that it can have no more than £100m next year for cultural projects. Meanwhile, the Millennium Dome is costing some £800 million — and rising; but as Mr Mandelson and Lord Rogers want it, who are we to say they are wrong?

So the good people of St Leonards can just hold their special Christian candles for two minutes at the end of 1999 and be grateful for the fact that, at the end of the second Millennium AD, they will have no parish church.

'Piloti'

Mr J.S. Leach — Miss C.L. Jones

Rutland & Stamford Mercury

EYE TV

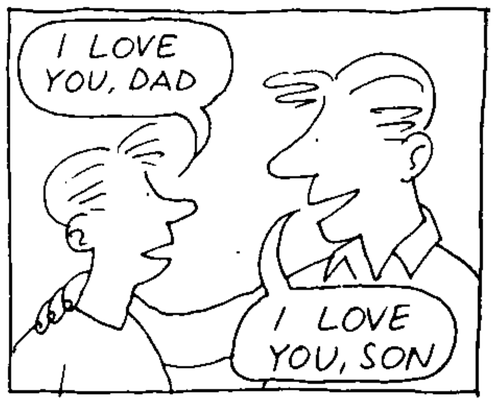
The Edinburgh Television Festival

FOR the first time in its history, the Edinburgh Television Festival wanted a great comedy duo to present the McTaggart lecture, which traditionally opens the annual media piss-up. When they couldn't get one, they asked Laurence Marks and Maurice Gran to do it instead. Creators of the long-running "comedy hit" *Birds of a Feather* **(one fat Cockney bird, one fatter Cockney bird), they are best known for not being Dick Clement and Ian La Frenais, their very rich rivals living it up in the Hollywood Hills.**

Mystified as to why they are not living it up in the Hollywood Hills too, Marks and Gran now get other people to do most of their TV writing because they are too busy writing speeches praising the American broadcasting system, in the hope that this may get them the mansion. America, they say, is a place which treasures its writers and pays them lots of dosh — unless, alas, they happen to be called Marks and Gran, who the Americans think write a load of old tosh.

As well as posh accommodation, the McTaggart Two demanded conference facilities as part of the package from the limited funds available and generally behaved as if they were in Hollywood. Expounding the thesis that they were brilliant in the Seventies, even more brilliant in the Eighties, and certainly the best writers in the world in the Nineties, they then spent three days hovering in the foyer of the George Hotel, waiting for people to come up and say, "Thou art indeed the most brilliant writers in the universe, oh mighty ones". Their modesty comes second only to their unfunniness.

The Telly Addicts session hosted by *Fifteen to One* host William G. Stewart featured a fondling round, in which media tarts Janet Street-Porter, Jaci Stephen and David Elstein were blindfolded and then required to identify TV executives by touch alone. "Start at the bottom! Kneel!" called an encouraging Stewart. "I don't kneel for any man," said Street-Porter to wild applause. "I, on the other hand," said Ms Stephen... After even wilder applause she dropped to the feet of Jonathan Powell, who she failed to guess after being unable to identify his genitals. A problem she might not have had with other TV executives.



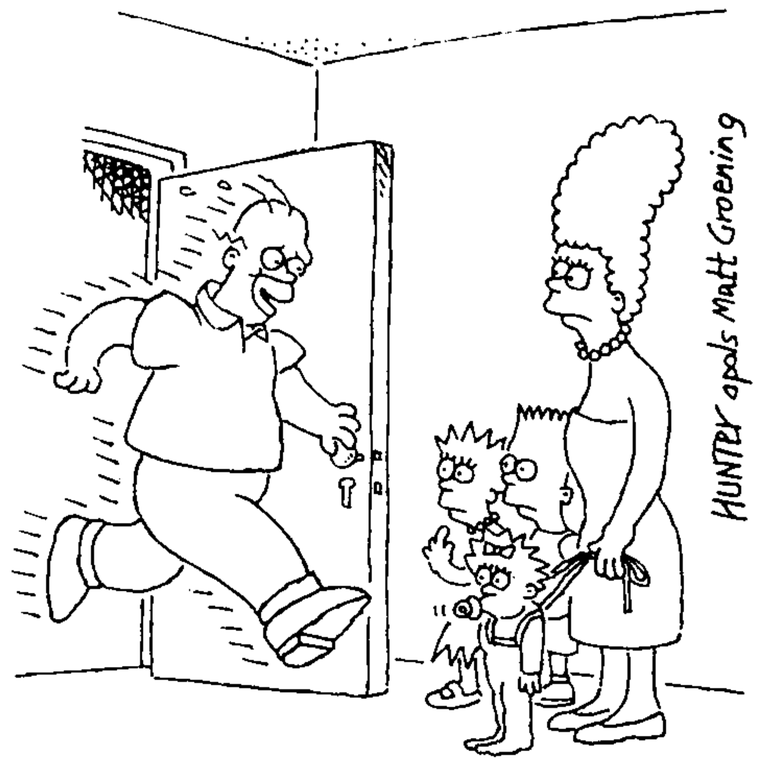
American TV

British TV

Coronation Street producer Brian Park had his hands full with Bruce Jones and Vicky Entwhistle, the soap's new Family from Hell characters Les and Janice Battersby. Les hit the Bank Holiday tabloids after shouting about not being allowed into his room in the hotel, which had been specially handpicked to keep the pair away from the hacks camping at the George. Banned by Park from setting foot in the place, they stood forlornly at the door, bemoaning their rotten £69 hotel room miles away, the lack of a "cash bar", and the rotten salaries Granada pays them for what they have to endure with their newfound stardom — most notably, not being able to go to their local and say "Fuck". Park has now dragged them in for a good talking to and is busy making contingency plans in a storyline that features a very dead Les.

With the *Guardian* sponsoring the festival for the first time, there was a spirit of intellect in the air that has hitherto evaded all previous years. The paper's only complaint was that they had been promised their logo was going to be the biggest one at the McTaggart lecture, and it wasn't. But then you couldn't see much at all with the heads of Marks and Gran on the podium.

'Tellytubby'



"Hi, Honey – I'm Homer!"

MEDIA NEWS

TONY "Head Prefect" Hall, head of BBC news and current affairs, has all but completed the purge of his fiefdom, now staffed by youthful know-nothings and compliant mediocrities. The final scalp was that of Peter Snow, long-standing *Newsnight* **anchorman and slightly-manic presenter of election results.**

Hall, who is terrified of veteran hacks, has long yearned to axe Snow. It has taken some time, but Snow's recent demands for huge contract fees provided "Head Prefect" with the excuse he needed. His *Newsnight* contract is not to be renewed, and the declining *Tomorrow's World* will soon be the sole employer of his hyperactive, mad-professor style.

Recent revelations about Snow's 33-year-old "love child" are said to be a complete coincidence, entirely unconnected with the fast-growing dirty tricks department at the BBC.

OVER the past couple of years, *Daily Mail* **readers have become used to regular updates on the life and times of Chris Evans. The paper has unflinchingly reported on Evans's profane career at that evil home of pornography, Channel 4, his debauched period as a DJ at Radio 1, his marital problems and booze-soaked outings with fellow** *giterati* **such as Danny Baker and Gazza.**

None of this coverage was complimentary, and indeed Evans quickly became a hate figure for *Mail* commentators such as Paul "Loonybins" Johnson, who urged the ITC and BBC to remove Evans from the airwaves.

Mysteriously though, there has been virtually no mention of Evans recently.

One possible explanation for this could be that, very quietly, Sir David English has led the *Daily Mail* and General Trust into a partnership with Evans's Ginger Productions. The two great media companies have combined to bid for an FM radio franchise for the North West.

The Radio Authority (often castigated in the *Mail* for tolerating yobbish broadcasters) is currently considering their application.

"We are very proud that this is a club of like-minded intelligent people which doesn't have a stuffy atmosphere. It is a club for gentlemen and, in saying that, we also embrace ladies."

The Times

DO you find planes a big yawn? The answer to a good night's sleep could be a new Australian pillow especially designed for travellers. Portillo, made from latex foam rubber, weighs only 450gm and can be rolled to a quarter of its size.

Weekend Australian

WE'VE BEEN TOLD BY THE BBC TO USE MORE TRADITIONAL SPEECH
WHY?
Teletubbies
BECAUSE WE'VE RECEIVED A MEMO FROM JOHN BIRT
WHAT DOES IT SAY?
Memo
IN WHAT IS ABOUT TO HAPPEN OR BECOME THAT WILL HEREAFTER BE APPLIED TO A PURPOSE EXISTING IN GREATER OR ADDITIONAL QUANTITY BELONGING OR RELATING EXCLUSIVELY OR DISTINCTLY BASED ON OR OBTAINED BY TRADITION WHILE ENGAGED IN THE FACULTY OF SPEAKING...
Memo
Ken Pyne

MYSTIC MUGS

ALTHOUGH thousands of people were asked to comment on the Princess of Wales's demise, print and broadcast hacks did ignore two potentially illuminating sources: Rita Rodgers, Diana's psychic adviser; and Madame Vasso, former clairvoyant to the Duchess of York.

Perhaps this was because neither woman had apparently foreseen the terrible events of 31 August...

THE news that Hong Kong journalist Tom Hilditch is to edit *Penthouse* caused little surprise in the former colony where his cramped flat was once used as a location for a noted arthouse film, er, *Viva Erotica*.

So impressed were the film's location scouts with Hilditch's wallpaper (it consisted entirely of nude women), they hired the flat on the spot. As for Hilditch, he spent so much time in Honkers writing about himself, his women and his problems that his departure from the *South China Morning Post* drew sighs of relief all round.

HUTCHINSON Whampoa, the London-based, Hong-Kong owned company behind the Orange mobile phone network, is experiencing problems with its plans to expand across the Irish sea.

An enterprising Dubliner has already opened his own Orange mobile business in the Irish Republic, taking advantage of all that expensive newspaper and magazine advertising by the unrelated British operation to establish a brand identity free of charge.

As the "real" Orange doesn't yet own an operating licence for the Republic, this is just about bearable. The real problem is Northern Ireland, where demand for mobiles is rising fast. Orange has an operating licence for Ulster and would dearly like to take on its competitors there.

There's just one slight problem: billboards across West Belfast and the Londonless part of Londonderry proclaiming "The Future Is Orange" may not go down well with nationalists (and indeed may not stay up long). Yet can the company's marketing people really countenance a change of brand name for Ireland alone?

The Future Is Green? Purple? Vomit?

I-BSkyB

What is the best goal you have ever scored? Reading v Oxford on Sky. I hit a volley with the outside of my right peg from 18 yards and it flew over the keeper. We won 2-0.

MARTIN WILLIAMS
Sun

An occasional column for which readers are invited to submit Sky-plugs masquerading as news items in Murdoch papers. The usual £10 will be paid.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

TREVOR McDONALD talking to one of the "royal experts" on ITV on Sunday: "Another question — not very different from that one is... er..."

REMEMBER EDS, the computer giant which has won — and lost — so many UK government contracts? Both the Child Support Agency and the student loans computer contracts experienced appalling backlogs (See *Eyes* passim).

A report in the *New York Times* might ring a bell with those who have had dealings with EDS: "The company that received a multi-million dollar contract to handle the refinancing of Federal student loans was so overwhelmed that applications have been delayed for months, the Education Department has said."

This firm had taken "more than five months to handle the typical loan consolidation; the department said it should take two to three months". The name of this dozy outfit? Step forward, EDS!

TEST MATCH SPECIAL

TEARS are flowing at the *Mirror*'s sports desk as hacks prepare to bid farewell to David "Barmy" Barmforth, their eccentric sports editor, at the end of September.

Over the last few weeks the *Mirror* has been a laughing stock for its preposterous antics during the England/Australia Test series.

So elated were the patriotic *Mirror* team after the false-dawn victory at Edgbaston that veteran photographer Dick Williams was told to present the team with a golden cricket ball each — and to get a "Golden Balls" picture (no relation to the great *Eye* campaign of the same name, by the way). Williams bought a box of cricket balls and a pot of gold paint and set to work. Unfortunately the lensman forgot to let the paint dry before putting the tampered balls back in the box — they stuck firmly to the cardboard and the paper's golden tribute had to be binned.

Another bright idea was to present the then out-of-form Aussie Captain, Mark Taylor, with a 3ft wide cricket bat. The paper printed the photo, but only after ambushing a reluctant Taylor with the bat. Australian team manager Alan Crompton was furious at the idiotic stunt and demanded the film. A roll was handed over. But it was the wrong roll, so the photo duly appeared. Crompton later informed Australian pressmen that he was making a complaint to the International Cricket Council.

Taylor was also the target of another brilliant *Mirror* jape. He was to be handed a one-way ticket back to Oz with the *Mirror*'s compliments. Fortunately, just before a hack was sent to deliver the ticket, someone realised that Taylor could have gone to the airline and cashed in the ticket — costing the *Mirror* £2,000.

Barmy's new job is as Number Three on PA's sports desk. Good luck to them.

Oasis album could be a record

Chester Chronicle

NEWS

WATER

Q: How can a greedy privatised water company increase its fat profit margins?

A: Charge the fire service to dig up thousands of perfectly good, working fire hydrants.

This is a cunning new wheeze from Lyonnaise des Eaux-owned Northumbrian Water which is replacing water mains and at the same time replacing fire hydrants — which it insists the local Tyne Wear Fire Authority must pay for. The fire service is having to divert money from its fire-fighting budget to pay the private company to replace hydrants it doesn't even want replaced. Tyne Wear has 24,000 fire hydrants, each costing between £295 and £1,180 to replace. Not surprisingly the fire service is fighting against paying the bills.

If the practice proves successful for Northumbrian it will no doubt catch on among other privatised water companies.

NOT content with using his institutional block vote at Yorkshire Water plc's agm to force through free share bonuses for executive directors (*Eye* 929), chairman Brandon Gough has once again demonstrated his sensitivity to customer feelings.

Three non-executive directors have just been appointed to the board of Yorkshire Water Services, the subsidiary of the plc which actually deals with water and sewage. Water regulator Ofwat demanded that those appointed be familiar with the concerns of consumers and able to represent their interests. Brandon Gough was on the interview panel.

One of the three appointed was the customers' champion, er, Brandon Gough.

NUKES & NUKEMEN

BOTH sides in the nuclear debate are squaring up for warfare at the TUC and party conferences, with the pro-nuke forces led by a nuclear "sleeper": John Battle, the energy minister.

Battle is the son of a former employee of British Nuclear Fuels. That was not something which he talked about in the run-up to the election, when he made highly favourable noises about developing renewable energy and even appeared on the platform of anti-nuclear organisations, accompanied by his smooth research assistant, Peter Metcalfe.

There was widespread surprise when, immediately after the election, Metcalfe joined BNFL as public affairs manager. He has opened the autumn offensive with an article in the Labour weekly *Tribune*, praising the work of the plutonium factory at Sellafield and its ability "to underpin thousands of jobs well into the next century". Jobs like those held by the minister's old man.

The Government has, until now, been paralysed by internal argument over nuclear power. The Thorp reprocessing plant needs urgent attention and the issue of finding a site to dump nuclear waste is unresolved after John Gummer threw out the nuclear industry's proposals.

Friends of the Earth and Sera (the environmentalist wing of the Labour Party) and a number of nuclear-free zone groups have for the first time formed a coalition to force the Government to produce a policy to deal with the mountain of nuclear waste, which is growing bigger every day that nuclear power stations continue to generate electricity.

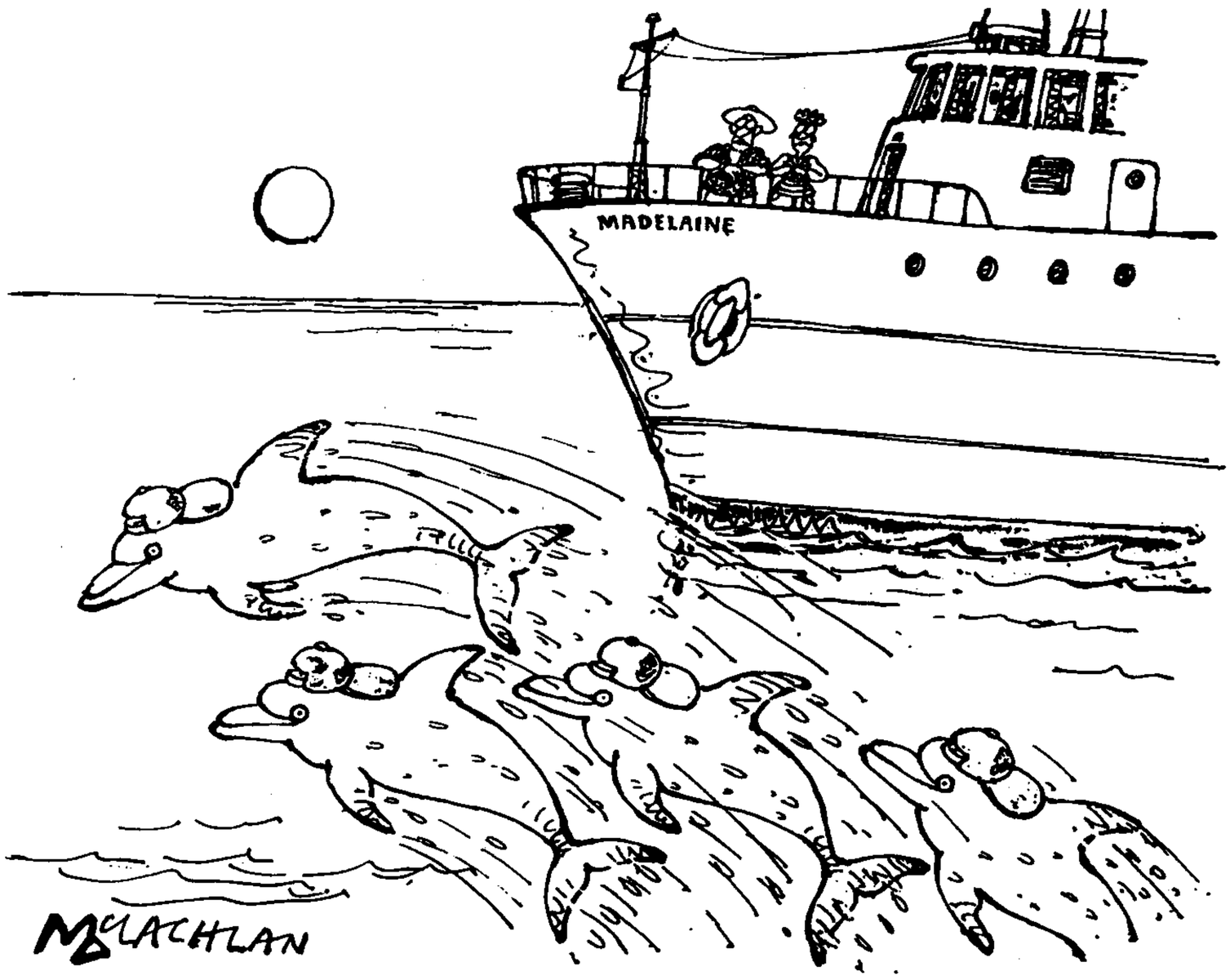
SUPERMARKET CHECKOUT

THE parting shot of the late and unlamented Tory quango known as the Leeds Development Corporation was to grant planning permission for a giant and unpopular Morrisons supermarket development on the green Kirkstall Valley in Leeds (*Eyes passim*).

The decision by the unelected quangocrats has been fought every inch of the way by local residents, amidst allegations of conflicts of interest, pecuniary advantage and mysteriously shredded documents. Morrisons thought it had won the day last year when an expensive High Court action went against the residents.

Now Leeds City Council has stepped in and refused planning permission for the new road scheme required if the supermarket and its 1,000-strong carpark is to be built. The issue will go to a public inquiry at the end of September.

How the Government reacts to the inquiry's findings will be an interesting test of its environmental attitudes. Will it side with a supermarket giant, granted planning permission by an unelected quango? Or will it side with local residents, supported by an elected Labour-controlled city council? Answers on a postcard, please, to John Prescott, the Government's environment and transport supremo...



"And I always thought dolphins were intelligent creatures"

FOCUS ON PRIVACY

FEW people know more about newspaper privacy laws in France than Britain's most publicity-shy press barons, the Barclay twins.

On 10 September the owners of the *Scotsman*, the *European* (and now *Sunday Business* which they have just bought from the receiver) will ask the appeal court in Paris to punish *Observer* hack John Sweeney for having had the temerity to "invade their privacy" by publishing a photograph of them.

A similar case earlier this year was thrown out by a Paris court unimpressed by their claim to have "an absolute right" over their photographic image. The decision was perhaps only fair given that the Barclays are, indirectly, part-owners of the salacious and privacy-invading *National Inquirer*. Sweeney was awarded 10,000 French francs.

Still, the twins have had some success pursuing hacks who write about them. Although they lost a criminal libel suit against Sweeney for an interview on BBC radio in the Channel Islands, they then sued him for civil libel at a court in Rennes, claiming that his jokey reference to Corporal Jones of *Dad's Army* — "they don't like it up 'em!" — was grossly defamatory. After the passage was translated into French the judges concurred and ordered Sweeney to pay the multi-millionaire brothers 20,000 francs in damages.

Despite the twins' attitude they want to relaunch *Sunday Business* under the dynamic guidance of Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill — who boasted last week that the paper would have "the story-breaking abilities of the *Sunday Times* business section of the 1980s". Whether Neill's commitment to "full disclosure", the title of his autobiography, is shared by his secretive bosses remains to be seen.

PS: Neill remains a very busy boy — dashing off features for the *Daily Mail*, acting as a consultant to Mohamed Fayed as well as presiding over the Barclays' growing empire as "editor-in-chief" of the *Scotsman* and *European*.

He is also sole director of small private company Glenburn Enterprises Ltd, which appears to handle Neill's media earnings and various property interests. For the year ended 31 December 1994, Glenburn reported an after-tax profit of £152,478 on a turnover of £1,026,558 (of which an impressive £822,155 was offset as "net administration expenses"). In the following year, the last for which accounts are available, Brillo's fortunes took a downturn: a net trading profit of just £35,867 (plus a £50,000 dividend) on turnover of £421,141. Neill-fanciers at Companies House are impatiently awaiting his report and accounts for the year ended December 1996 in the hope of detecting the green shoots of recovery.

BODY STROP

CARING cosmetics company The Body Shop showed its true colours over August bank holiday when it ran a free massage session on Brighton seafront. Nothing wrong with that — except that the full-time massage service already run there by one David Lehman lost all its holiday business.

Mr Lehman, who for the last year has offered his services from premises licensed by the council, was also struck by a coincidence. One of his clients — who happens to be a manager for The Body Shop, but not in Brighton — had asked to see his business plan several months ago and expressed an interest in investing money in it. The money was never forthcoming — but a row of Body Shop aromatherapists and masseurs offering free services over the bank holiday were.

When Mr Lehman learnt of the free service he angrily told The Body Shop masseurs they were working illegally and started to dismantle their equipment. They complained to Brighton and Hove council. Mr Lehman has since received a letter from Brighton and Hove threatening that his "licence will be revoked or a new one not granted" if it receives any further complaints about him. However, the council did admit The Body Shop's free service was run "without our sanction or knowledge".

Rotten Boroughs

Hillingdon

RENFREWSHIRE is not the only place where Labour politics is wracked with violence, hypocrisy and suicide. The suburban *ennui* of dreary Hillingdon, Middlesex, was recently disturbed by the suicide of Labour councillor Phil Kordun, who took an overdose on 17 August.

Labour councillors, putting on their best Tommy Graham faces, are mortified. He was, after all, a good comrade who was also chairman of the West London Waste Authority and a vociferous supporter of the council's anti-domestic violence campaign. But Kordun was also a wife-beater, as was well-known to senior Labour councillors, and had recently left home.

Kordun's suicide is a grave embarrassment for Labour Party officers still reeling from the by-election defeat in Uxbridge (which is in the borough), during which Kordun was carefully concealed from public view. Party bosses are now anxiously examining Kordun's suicide note for any Gordon McMaster-style allegations.

Freeloader of the Week

SHARP-EYED bouncers at an Essex night club were not fooled when a tired and emotional councillor flashed her ID card and demanded admission.

Colchester Labour councillor Tina Cooke insisted that she wanted to "check the club for under-age drinkers". But the manager of the Chicago Rock Cafe refused to let her in.

Unfortunately for Tina, anonymous letters to the local press spilt the beans and she had to apologise publicly for her behaviour.

Nice to see that despite New Labour's puritanical diktats, comrades in the boroughs are still up to their old tricks (hic).

Hackney

SAM YEBOAH, Hackney's one-time personnel director and self-styled "most senior African employee", who left the council in a fit of pique two years ago, is still haunting the benighted authority.

Yeboah, whose industrial tribunal case against Hackney is now the longest-running in local government history, wants £1,063,000 compensation from the borough for being "racially harassed". Yeboah, who received a £60,000 lump sum when he took early retirement and is on a £35,000-a-year pension, is being backed by that well-known waster of public money, the Commission for Racial Equality.

Could that be the same CRE which took little interest in the dreadful tales of illegal immigrants with bogus references taking Hackney jobs while Yeboah was in charge of personnel? It certainly could.

Job ad of the week

IT'S UNLIKELY that northern England's most scandal-ridden council will be inundated with applicants for what may be the least wanted job in local government — press officer for Doncaster council.

Doncaster is currently under investigation by Inspector Knacker, the district auditor and an internal inquiry team, and the ruling Labour group has been suspended by the national party, yet the council will pay only £24,510 to the successful applicant.

Tower Hamlets

RESIDENTS of ever-impoverished Tower Hamlets, now vying with Hackney as Britain's poorest borough, will be pleased to know that social services director Sandra Walmsley has been made a research fellow for the School of Public Policy at Birmingham University after finishing her two-year course there.

So what will Walmsley do now? Some work for Tower Hamlets' social services, perhaps? No, she has retired from the authority and is advising Peterborough council on setting up a social services department.

How helpful for the people of Tower Hamlets, who have paid her £120,000 in wages since she stopped working for them to study at Birmingham.

Taff

IAN EVANS, the £40,000-a-year manager of Rhondda Cynon Taff council's direct labour department, has been sacked following an inquiry into his links with a former councillor who runs two bus companies in the valleys. There were suspicions that the cosy relationship could influence the letting of council contracts for school transport.

Evans was in partnership with Welsh nationalist Clayton Jones, who chaired a panel which appointed Evans in the early 1990s. Jones failed to keep his seat when the then Taff Ely council was subsumed into Rhondda Cynon Taff in 1995. Without a friend at court Evans's time ran out — and Jones, now spending more time with his wheels, has received a municipal bollocking.

What's in a name?

TARSAM KING'S first action as the new leader of Sandwell Council, West Midlands, was to twin it with the industrial Punjab town of Amritsar.

This puzzled some locals, but not those who remember the councillor when he first stood for office in the 1980s and expediently changed his name to King — from Singh.

Pseuds Corner

But the Rev Alan Garrow, 30, from Waltham Abbey, Essex, said Teletubbie talk has parallels with church language. "They have their own idiolect built around their name — 'teletubbietustard' is custard, for example.

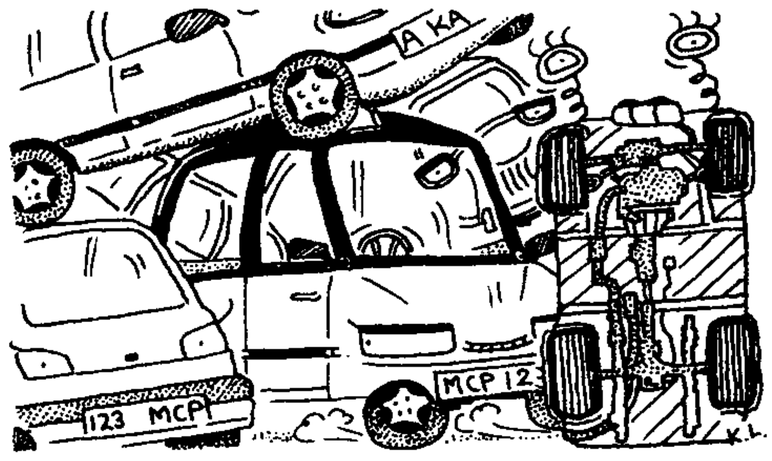
"This reminds us of the religious jargon often used by Christians..."

The curate also claimed the programme demonstrated rituals similar to church liturgical actions. The Teletubbies' group hugs were reminiscent of Anglican demonstrations of peace.

Shropshire Star

"Bee looked quite, quite radiant," whispers a pal, "in her gold Abba suit. We were all *so* jealous." "We didn't want to call it a hen night," said another bookish admirer. "It was a *soirée poussin.*"

Diary item about A.N. Wilson's daughter, Bee
Evening Standard



... parking is to driving as death is to life: a supremely significant moment of definition, of closure, of release... parking is not only like death: it's like the afterlife, specifically the one imagined by Dante, in his Purgatorio (which involved a lot of going round and round until eventual salvation). Of course, if you have not yet found a space, you are not in purgatory, you are in hell.

NICHOLAS LEZARD
Guardian

Video games are a symptom, not a cause, of social degeneration... The triumph of Tomb Raider's Lara Croft and Mario the Plumber is part of the tendency towards the privatised, consumerist postmodern condition that is reflected in many other areas of life.

DR TOM SHAKESPEARE
Guardian

The project proposes the objective of the reconnection of the preexisting building fabric by means of the careful consideration of the system of measurements of urban spaces. When the typological deformation is compared with the morphological aspects of the whole, an idea of architecture develops which knows how to capture and increase the value of the differences as the specificity of individual solutions in relation to the conditions of context.

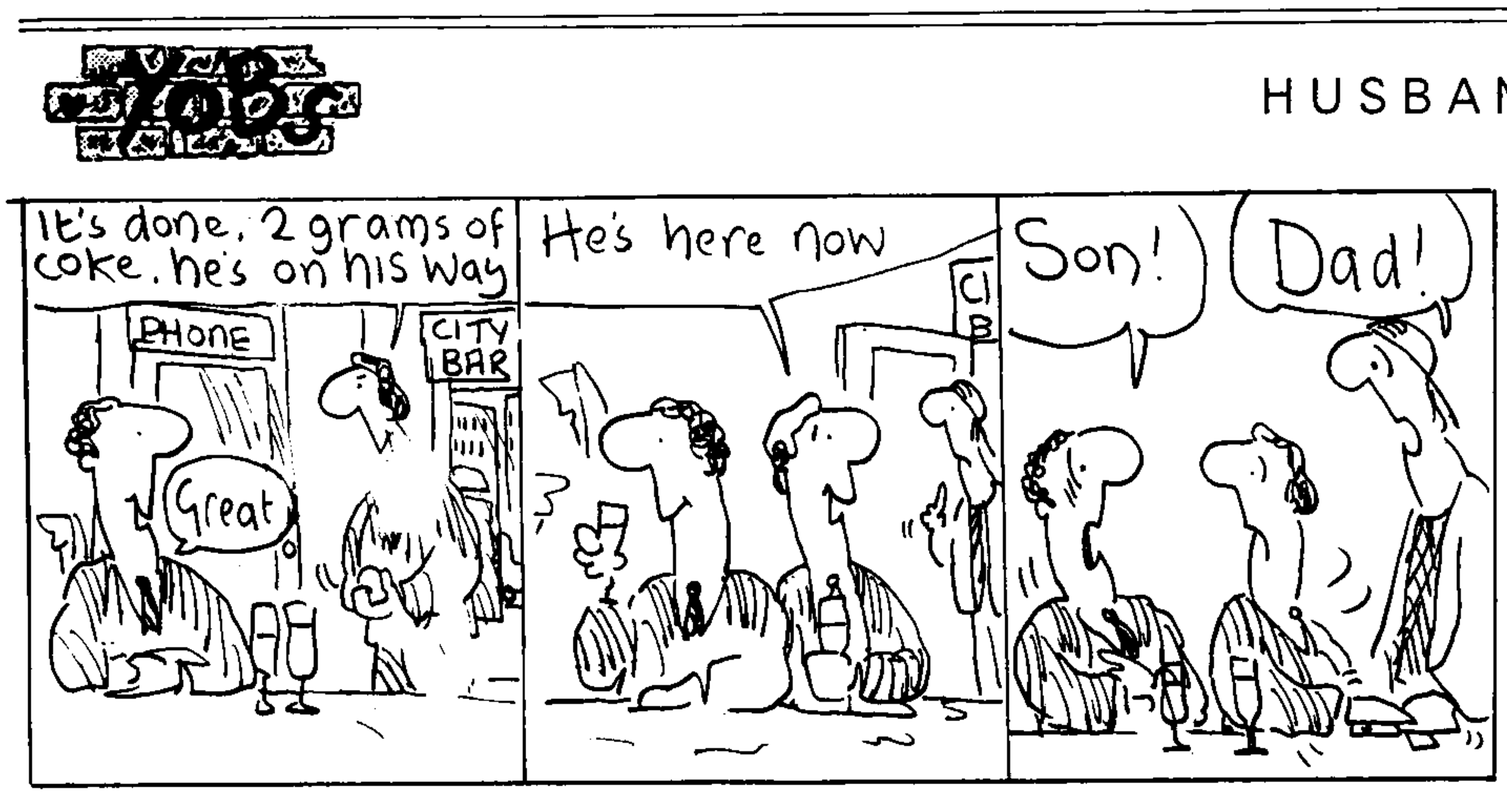
Venezia citta del Moderno

Where is utopia on our mental maps? That's where we're headed for although we'll never get there.

Body Shop Annual Report

CONTRIBUTORS: G. Vahramian, S. Mannorak, Stephen Royston, Toby Dallmeyer, C. Cooley, William Angold.

£10 paid for entries.



SIGNAL FAILURES

Rail safety up the Junction

PRIVATE rail businesses are sneering at safety regulations introduced after the Clapham Junction accident, which killed 35 people in 1988.

One reason why rail transport is much safer than road is that over many decades there has been a continuous refining of safety procedures. Privatisation interrupted all that. Now some of the new companies believe they are immune to accidents.

Last month it was revealed that Stagecoach-owned South West Trains (which now operates the services involved in the 1988 crash) was pressing its drivers to work for six weeks with only three rest days. Overworking of safety-critical personnel was one of the problems which emerged in the Clapham Junction inquiry, but that does not worry SWT. "This is no different to Marks & Spencer asking staff to do more hours during a busy period," a spokeswoman said.

Evidently she does not appreciate that a tired driver can potentially kill and injure members of the public (especially as the post-Clapham recommendation of automatic train protection has been ignored), whereas the possibility of being overcharged for an M&S prawn sandwich has no such implications. The spokeswoman is not alone. By seriously asking drivers to work 13-day fortnights, senior SWT managers have shown they equate train driving with selling underpants. They are also flouting recommendation 18 of the Clapham Junction report, which states no individual should work excessive overtime.

Stagecoach bus drivers have no such problems, as their hours are restricted by law. Anyone familiar with Stagecoach's history (see *Eyes* passim) will know the company is adept at exploiting any regulatory loopholes it finds. Now it will use the lack of constraints on train-driving hours to cover for the continuing effects of its famous cock-up over redundancies. Such constraints were not needed previously because British Rail was generally a conscientious employer. Perhaps they are needed now that the greed and cynicism on which the Stagecoach empire was built have infiltrated the rail industry.

Stagecoach, through SWT and Porterbrook train leasing, owns and operates many old carriages of the same weak design that contributed to the high death toll at Clapham Junction. The report stressed that all carriages of this type must be strengthened or replaced before 1998. Privatisation took precedence over safety, and now the Health and Safety Executive is planning to set an over-generous second deadline of 2007. By then some of these trains will be 50 years old. The HSE has devised and rigidly enforced all kinds of stupid safety rules for the railways, such as banning train services from stations where the platform is shorter than the trains or, after dusk, stations which have no lighting (forcing travellers to use road transport instead, where the safety risks are much higher). Now the HSE is jibbing out of a directive which actually would make travel safer.

If the privatised railway was desperately short of cash, the HSE's soft attitude might be tolerable. As it is, public subsidy to the railways has doubled, partly so that Porterbrook and the other train leasing companies can rake in vast profits. Yet the number of new trains on order is pathetic compared with the quantity of safety-risk carriages in service.

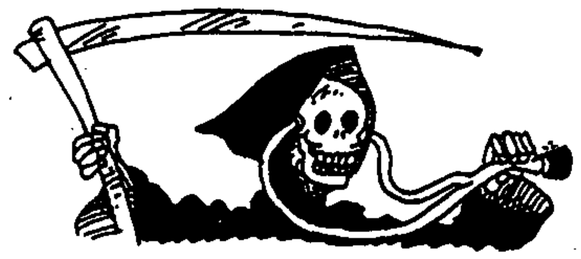
Railtrack, too, has forgotten the lessons of Clapham Junction. In June a Virgin Rail express train near Coventry was given a signal to continue straight ahead, but was switched into a siding. Fortunately, the siding was empty at the time. Railtrack's investigations indicated that engineering contractors had incorrectly connected the wires to the signal and the point giving access to the siding. Crossed wires were the cause of the Clapham Junction accident and the subsequent report recommended new procedures to ensure this danger would not arise again. Railtrack has forgotten not only BR's experience but also its own; less than two years ago a train crash occurred at Chingford, Essex, because Railtrack contractors had incorrectly wired signalling equipment.

Privatisation has brought to the railways a number of money-focused managers who believe they can cock a snook at a safety culture built on more than a century of running railways. Sadly, it will take another serious accident to teach them the lessons BR had learned the hard way before privatisation.

● A fall in share price is not the only problem confronting Prism Rail (see *Eye* 928). Prospective suppliers are being advised by a credit-referencing agency not to lend more than £8,500 to Prism Rail. Managers are not likely to be unduly rattled by this rating, though, as Prism's investment plans are so thin it probably won't need much more than £8,500 anyway.

'Dr B. Ching'

"Oh, that's nice. Romulus and Remus have started toilet training"



DOING THE ROUNDS

Why are we waiting?

IN THE last week, MD has seen two patients who have been waiting more than 18 months for cataract operations.

One is effectively housebound and the other regularly scalds herself with the kettle and has multiple bruising from frequent falls. The operation they both require is extremely successful and quick. It can be done as a day case and is therefore not affected by bed shortages. The NHS hospital they have been referred to has a full quota of eye surgeons and offers private cataract operations with a nine-day wait. Those who can't afford to pay are waiting 70 times as long to be treated in the same NHS hospital by the same surgeon using the same equipment. Frank Dobson's pledge to end two-tierism in the NHS is already looking mighty thin.

● Labour may blame the previous government for bequeathing it the largest-ever rise in waiting lists (up 13 per cent, with 47,000 waiting more than a year), but it has also inherited an NHS with more money and more surgeons than ever before. The problem lies in what the surgeons actually do. In 1995 the Audit Commission discovered, unbelievably, that an average full-time NHS surgeon does from just three to six hours at an NHS operating table per week. This compares with 20 hours a week in most other EU countries. If NHS surgeons operated on NHS patients for just 15 hours a week, *no NHS patient would have to wait more than six days for an operation*. The NHS would become just as fast and remain a lot safer and cheaper than the private sector. So why hasn't it?

● Many surgeons are desperate to be given more NHS operating time, as witnessed by the number who put in extra hours in aid of the Conservative's waiting list initiative. Outrageous waits of six years or more have all but disappeared, and the 250,000 patients waiting more than a year for surgery in 1989 were reduced to 4,756 by September 1996. Some surgeons claimed that this political expediency had allowed those waiting longer for routine operations to leapfrog over those waiting shorter for urgent surgery, but there is little hard evidence for this. The average NHS wait during this time rose slightly from 34 to 42 days, but the scheme was a temporary success. Alas, when the Conservatives stood back and fed the NHS to the internal market, the logjam quickly reappeared.

● The surgeons themselves are not without blame. They control the waiting lists and those with a keen interest in private practice are less enthusiastic about reducing NHS waits. NHS surgeons at present only have to turn up for a maximum of three-and-a-half days a week, leaving them plenty of time to pursue other interests. The private system in the UK allows insurance companies to write policies that pick easy acute cases in healthier people, leaving the NHS to provide for the chronic, difficult cases and the very sick. In addition, the NHS has for years acted as a free safety net to bail out private hospital disasters. The response has been not to improve the free service so as to make private care unnecessary, but to invest in additional NHS paybeds to undercut private hospitals.

● At present, the NHS employs a large number of consultant surgeons at £50-£70,000 a year (plus pension and perks) who are given the ridiculous operating resources of half a day a week. Teaching, research and administration take up more time, but there's a lot of paid thumb-twiddling and absconding to private competitors. A better solution for the NHS would be to pick the good surgeons, provide them with full operating facilities throughout the year and pay them well enough to be genuinely full-time (ie, doing no private work). Their work could then be targeted at areas of greatest need — such as giving old people the gift of sight.

'M.D'

Letters

Private Eye

Trust worthies

Sir,

I was most concerned by the report in Sunday's OBSERVER. *To ensure independence, the* EYE *really needs to be owned by a trust. Why not promote a "Reader buy out" to initiate this, with the proviso that no one can own more than 0.1% of the shares? Perhaps one of Cooky's family could front it?*

I would certainly be prepared to stump up £50, maybe £100 to invest in my future rights, liberties and amusement!

Regards,
SASHA CLARKSON,
Saundersfoot, Pembrokeshire.

Hoots and hootsmon

Sir,

*Amused as I was by your McHansard piece (*EYE *931), I was however displeased by your sloppy use of the Scots language. "Gang awae" is acceptable, as awae is a colloquialism, as is "shame on ye"; "shaddup, ya old slag" is not. Shaddup is not remotely Scottish; slag describes an object which is soft, wet and blob-like. If, as I believe, you were wishing to describe the speaker's alleged "Ugandan Parameters" then the phrase "Haud yer wheesht ya auld hure" is to be preferred. One final point: Donald Dewar has proposed that the new — if voted for — Scottish parliament be a dry house. New Labour, Nae Bevvy. Keep sticking the boot in where it's deserved and I'll keep buying your organ.*

Yours depressed at having to vote on the joke of a devolution white paper,

MR A. POLITICAL
(aka MIKE KNOX),
Leith, Edinburgh.

Clever-dick head

Sir,

As editor of MENSA MAGAZINE, *Simon Clark is answerable to an editorial board of four members. He is also answerable to the committee of members who run Mensa. He has a duty to publish letters from members whoever they are and whatever their political views, not to censor them as your two recent articles seem to suggest he should (*EYE *931).*

Mensa members' views cover the entire political spectrum. To suggest Mensa is right wing is crap. In June, Simon was under fire for publishing the picture of a Labour MP on the cover!

I don't think Simon is a perfect editor, but I do think he's done a bloody good job for Mensa for more than 10 years and at least deserves that you bother to check your facts before slagging him off in print.

Yours,
RICHARD MILTON,
Tonbridge, Kent.

Casual acquaintance

Sir,

I lived in London 1987-90 and still try to keep in touch with British life via satellite TV, newspapers and magazines. Now and then new and confusing expressions appear, for instance "dress down Friday" or "casual Friday", which I believe has something to do with the relaxation of the dress-code among normally formally dressed white-collar workers — but in what way? I have been given to understand that you possess a photograph that could ease my confusion in this matter.

Yours sincerely,
KJELL SWANBERG,
Bromma, Sweden.

Up the junction

Sir,

Re: Brummegem Breakdown (in communication). I was amused to read of the lengths to which hacks and smudgers at the BIRMINGHAM POST *had to go to ensure that fearless leader "Rommel" Montgomery might find his way unerringly from London to their city centre hideaway, taking snaps of the appropriate junction off the M6 and so on (p6,* EYE *930). However, I was a little puzzled to read that "snappers were also told to photograph landmarks, like the RAC control centre, to help Montgomery on his way".*

Why? Because any fule no that if you're coming from London, the RAC control centre is a good ten miles past the Spaghetti Junction exit for the Aston Expressway and Birmingham City centre, beyond even the junction with the M5 and way up by sunny Walsall.

This begs the question, did the POST *snappers deliberately make Montgomery drive miles out of his way, or is it simply that your Street of Shame correspondent is as hazy as Rommel himself when it comes to navigating anywhere north of Watford Gap? I think we should be told!*

Regards,
PAUL BLEZARD,
Hampton, Middlesex.

Lookalike

Rembrandt

Whitehouse

Sir,

On a recent visit to Amsterdam I was struck by this portrait of Rembrandt saying "Suit you, sir" in 17th-century Dutch. Apparently a descendant of his, called Paul Whitehouse, is currently resident in England.

Yours sincerely
BEDE ROGERSON,
East Dereham, Norfolk.

Loan shark

Sir,

Don't for a minute think that I'm a friend or even reader of the egregious Greek, but I'm afraid his book THE GREEK UPHEAVAL *is in the British Library catalogue. To make things worse, I also found a copy of it lurking in the open stacks of the Cambridge University Library. Someone took it out as recently as last year!*

Yours faithfully,
D.F. KING,
Cambridge.

"The Grand Old Duke of York
He had 100 men —
well you can't get the recruits nowadays!"

Pooling re-sources

Sir,

It's a fair cop (Detective Story, EYE *931)! When preparing our story about the 15 defendants accused of fraud and racketeering in connection with the failed takeover of Littlewoods, I spinelessly concentrated on Moores family matriarch Lady Grantchester, her son James, and her brother John.*

As your story suggests, I must surely have been paralysed with fear at the appearance in the list of Christopher More, a Cheshire private investigator who apparently scared off a local journalist who dared to favour Owen Oyston (see EYES *passim ad nauseam).*

Thanks to you, I realise I should have used the Littlewoods story as an opportunity to ignore the household name, multi-millionaire family which controls Britain's biggest privately-owned business empire. Instead, I should have puzzled readers with old anecdotes about someone I'd never heard of. Courageous stuff indeed!

Best regards,
TONY HETHERINGTON,
Mail on Sunday.

A whip round

Sir,

How very, very apt of "Hackwatcher" to denounce "a handful of London media types whipping themselves into a frenzy over something that is largely of interest to" London media types. I tried to bring up this subject down t'pub t'other night but couldn't get a word in edgeways with everybody so vehemently debating the latest revelations in Street of Shame.

Yours sincerely
FRANK DESMOND,
London SE3.

Shy and retiring

Sir,

*So Square Eyes thinks Mr Ronnie Barker is returning to the screen after 20 years of retirement (*EYE *931)? So, he retired in 1977, whilst filming Porridge, and the retired Barker then went on to star in Open All Hours (no mean feat for a retired gentleman) and other series. Poor old Square Eyes, maybe it's time for him to retire…*

Yours retiringly,
D.J. WALKER-MORGAN,
Via e-mail.

SPITTING TV PUPPETS STOLEN FROM CAR 334
ATTACK CASHLESS WOMAN STRUCK BY MAN 335
BLOW JOBS LOST AT GOVERNMENT OFFICE 336
PARK MAN MUGGED AT GUNPOINT IN CITY 337

I-SPY *Teletext*

Submitted by Steve Ball. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

Trading unions

Sir,

Re: Robin Hill's letter (EYE *931) on "Part of the Union". Not wishing to sound an anorak, but I thought that the "writers" of this song had plagiarised the Woody Guthrie song "Union Maid".*

Yours,
BRIAN ROBINSON,
Brentwood, Essex.

Happy eater

Sir,

Following the news item that a McDonalds customer in the States allegedly found a used condom in his Big Mac and is consequently extremely worried about contracting Aids, I discovered that an anagram of "sesame seed bun" is "semen based sue". Hmmmm. Food for thought.

CLIVE PENFOLD,
Hampton, Middlesex.

Not really

Sir,

One has to wonder about the academic rigour applied on Honiton Community College's Spice Girl Studies course, which will be answering the question of what people "really, really, really want". Any fool should know that the line in question contains only two "reallys".

Yours really, really faithfully,
TOBY O'CONNOR MORSE,
Via e-mail.

"You have to hand it to Harvey. He gets to the point"

May the faucet be with you

Sir,

Staff at the IPPR are still recovering from the news that they apparently work in "luxurious premises" complete with gold-plated lavatory taps.

Please find enclosed a set of taps exactly the same as the ones found in the shared areas of this building (the ones in our own offices are rather less grand). If you can find any gold on them, please feel free to scrape it off and keep it.

Would you then please return the taps, which are in much better condition than those already in place.

Yours sincerely,
GERALD HOLTHAM,
Director, IPPR.

PS. We were also bemused to find Lord Hollick singled out for mention as "subsidising" the IPPR's work. Lord Hollick's contribution — welcome though it is — actually amounts to approximately 0.4 of one per cent of our annual turnover. Oh yes, and Baroness Blackstone resigned the chairmanship of the IPPR when she was appointed a Government minister. I could go on...

The effluent society

Sir,

Re: Water News (EYE *931). Your article has attempted to connect two quite separate aspects of South West Water's activities. The new sewage screening plant at Camborne will remove sewage-related debris such as panty liners and condoms but will do nothing to reduce the risks from bacteria and viruses (contained in sh*t) in the sewage. The beach and bathing waters will be aesthetically improved but the dangers of infection to swimmers and surfers will be unchanged.*

In contrast, the problem with cryptosporidium (strictly speaking a parasite) was in drinking water, not sewage and affected the Littlehempston water treatment works which serves Torquay in South Devon (far from North Cornwall).

Removal of bacteria and viruses from sewage can be carried out using tried and tested technology, such as that adopted by Welsh Water following campaigning by surfers. The source of cryptosporidium in raw water sources is uncertain and there is no standard method for removing it.

The record of the water companies in providing safe and clean drinking water is much better than their efforts to modernise sewage treatment, particularly in coastal areas. Please keep up the pressure in your esteemed organ to persuade them to divert some of their vast resources from fat-cat salaries and inflated dividends to improving coastal waters.

Yours faithfully,
CLIVE VAISEY,
London SE11.

● *Thanks for the many letters about William Dalrymple's schooldays. He did not, as we suggested, go to Eton, nor did he go to Harrow, Rugby or Neasden Comprehensive, as a number of readers claimed. Mr Dalrymple, the noted author and assiduous book reviewer, went to Ampleforth.*

Birth rights

Sir,

Re: Folic Acid and Pregnancy — (Doing The Rounds, EYE *930). My wife found out about this link only because she attended a family planning clinic and told a nurse that we were thinking of having a baby. We were given a leaflet on the subject, but how many countless others have been left in ignorance? Please continue to over expose your august member, in order that we may remain entertained and well informed.*

G. MARTIN,
East Croydon.

PS. You forgot to mention that rather cheap veg, asparagus, which has a very high folic acid content. I think this should be mass produced to make it a staple diet for everyone. Let them eat asparagus...

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Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

"I'm glad two sides of the cherry have been put forward."
GEOFFREY BOYCOTT, Radio 5 Live
(John Mullarkey)

"It has been the German Army's largest peacetime operation since World War 2."
ITN
(Richard Lee)

"...and you could see Parnevik's heart visibly drop..."
PETER ALLIS, BBC
(Alan M. Cohen)

"At last a smile from Jacques Villeneuve to match his bleached hair..."
JONATHAN LEDGARD, Radio 4
(Mike McDermott)

Interviewer: *You're hauling a very big sledge.*
Explorer: *Yes, about 200lbs.*
Interviewer: *So how much stuff do you have to take with you?*
Explorer: *About 200lbs.*
Radio 4
(Dave Trott)

HOM SAP

BY DAVID AUSTIN

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"I knew that something was amiss when the bride dropped her bouquet and lost her balance," Chisomo Lungu explained to the stunned wedding guests at a church in Kabwe. "Then, when I got close to the altar, I saw that the couple were smeared in turdies, and I realised what had happened. I never believed in witchcraft before, but after this episode I know it exists."

Lungu was giving his version of the events that had led to the last-minute postponement of his nephew's wedding. "My nephew had broken off a previous engagement, and the girl's family were jealous of his new fiancee. They threatened to disrupt the wedding with constant telephone calls and sorcery. We'd had a few late night calls, but we didn't believe they'd carry out the threats about the magic. But as the couple walked towards the altar, both dressed in white, a mysterious force overtook them. They dropped to the floor and began jumping up and down like chickens on a hot tin roof, and they both messed their wedding outfits with heavy diarrhoeal discharge.

"The putrid smell was unbearable, and we couldn't hide what had happened because there were huge brown stains on their clothes. The priest shouted 'you are filth, get out of my church you filth', and some members of the congregation were sick because of the trail of smelly dripping discharge that was left on the church floor. We had no option but to call the wedding off. Her parents are blaming it on the shellfish served at the wedding breakfast but I know better. It was witchcraft, and my nephew will have to marry someone else." *(Sunday Times of Zambia, 10/8/97. Spotter: Adam Lethbridge)*

— o —

"Gunther punched his fist in the air, shouted 'catch me', and jumped off the stage," Egor Prosnecki told journalists outside a Hamburg night club, "but we didn't even try to catch him. Oh no. We all just stepped out of the way, and roared with laughter when he hit the concrete."

Prosnecki, an eighteen-year-old rock fan, was describing the death of German heavy metal rock star Gunther Dietz earlier that evening. "Gunther usually dived off the stage as the climax to his show, and his fans always caught him. It was sort of a tradition. But he turned up two hours late for tonight's gig, and then made things worse by sacking Kugel, his lead guitarist. Most of the fans prefer Kugel to Gunther, and they were all pretty pissed off with him. Nobody said anything, but we all just grinned and made no attempt to catch Gunther after he jumped. He smashed head first into the concrete floor. He remained con-

scious for about a minute and kept crying out for his mummy. Somebody pissed over him which I thought was a bit rude. But, if you ask me, he got what he deserved." *(Saint John Telegraph Journal (Canada), 10/8/97. Spotter: Brendan Joseph O'Byrne)*

— o —

"I do not consider myself to be a gullible man," Ahmed al-Dahreb told Sudanese journalists, "and when the magician first told me that he could 'make my money give birth', I was frankly suspicious. However, I decided to give him $300 on a trial basis, just to see what happened.

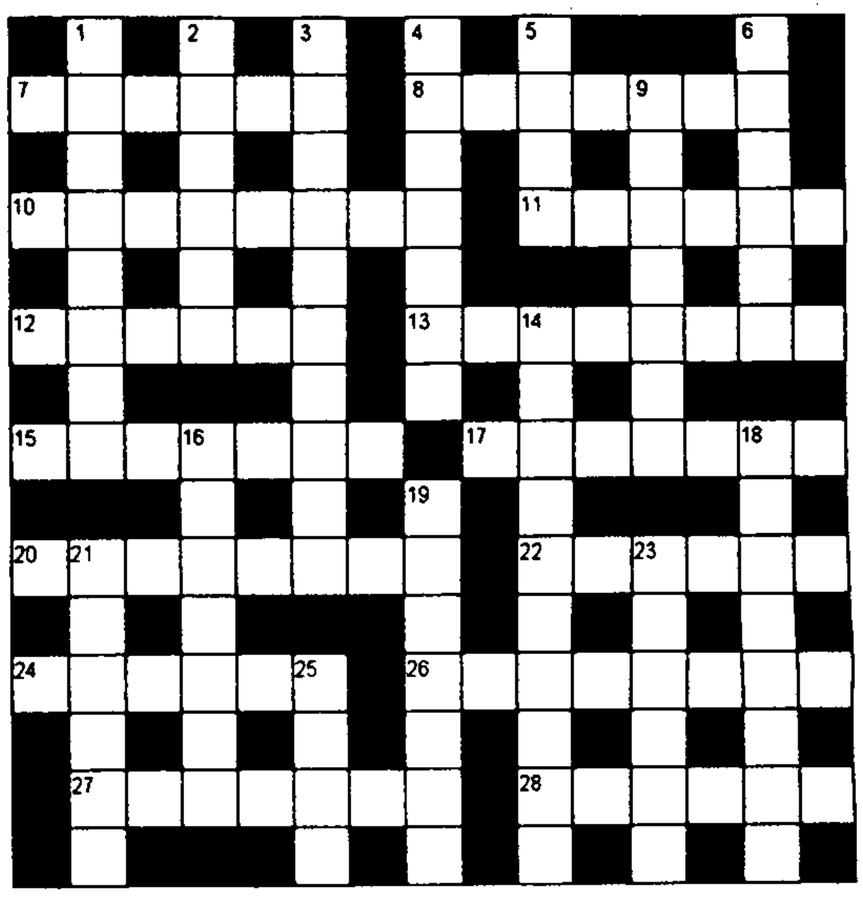
"We went together into a roomful of incense smoke, and I placed the money on the floor while the magician chanted. Once the smoke began to clear, I could see a black genie squatting on the bank notes. When the genie disappeared, I saw that my money had doubled. I told the magician that I was now convinced, and he told me that next time I should bring my entire life savings, so they could be doubled too. I did so, all $800,000 of it, but this time the genie let out a loud laugh and took all my money away, and the magician told me that 'there has been a miscarriage'. He told me to go home and sacrifice twenty-seven sheep to appease the genie. I did, but when I returned to the magician's house, he and the genie had both disappeared, and so had all my money."

An official from the Sudanese interior ministry later warned that there had been dozens of similar cases in the Khartoum area. Two Sudanese men are currently awaiting trial, charged with buggery and obtaining over $5,000,000 under false pretences. (Akhbar Al Yaum, 5/6/97. Spotter: J. M. Roberts)

COMPILED BY **VICTOR LEWIS-SMITH**

EYE CROSSWORD 87

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

7 Jailbirds (flipping American) long for old banger (6)
8 Once popped the question with no clothes on? (7)
10/14 Stud, black, not long going to gay capital to get hard information on Tony's pseudo little organ (2,6,6,4)
11 How hacks reportedly call our ex-PM (6)
12 Fast food, the fat dirty old man's habit (3,3)
13 Couple re-doing place out (8)
15 Bloody member on youth, no longer the force it was (3,4)
17 Some prat Sir Teddy, backing a high flier (7)
20 National hero taking club to Philip perhaps (4,4)
22 Arse-licking S and M aggressive host (6)
24 Court favourite, one big laugh, is buggered (6)
26 Member, nuts about stealing (8)
27 As used by our old queen getting the like of Margaret on the piss (reportedly) (5,2)
28 It could go to one's head, sounding like the Beeb's director general (6)

DOWN

1 Principle — of havin' the cat seen to, by the sound of it? (8)
2 Yeltsin's first to enter a squalid house — that's the benefit of state protection (6)
3 Clary: "I'm up Sid's end — wild party!" (5,5)
4 Commie has to snog bigoted reactionary (3-4)
5 Sick of bearing support for a religious arse (4)
6 Time cops and lawyer set up junkie (6)
9 Model abandons underwear, getting the runs (7)
14 (see 10)
16 Johnson's about to prepare for breeding — pardon? (7)
18 Member inflamed, by the sound of it — an IRA tactic? (8)
19 Heavy smokers, these mutts? (7)
21 Jolly they fly, shags (6)
23 Labour leader's fight not started to a point? (6)
25 Clinton's not getting head — such suffering! (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 12.09.97. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 85

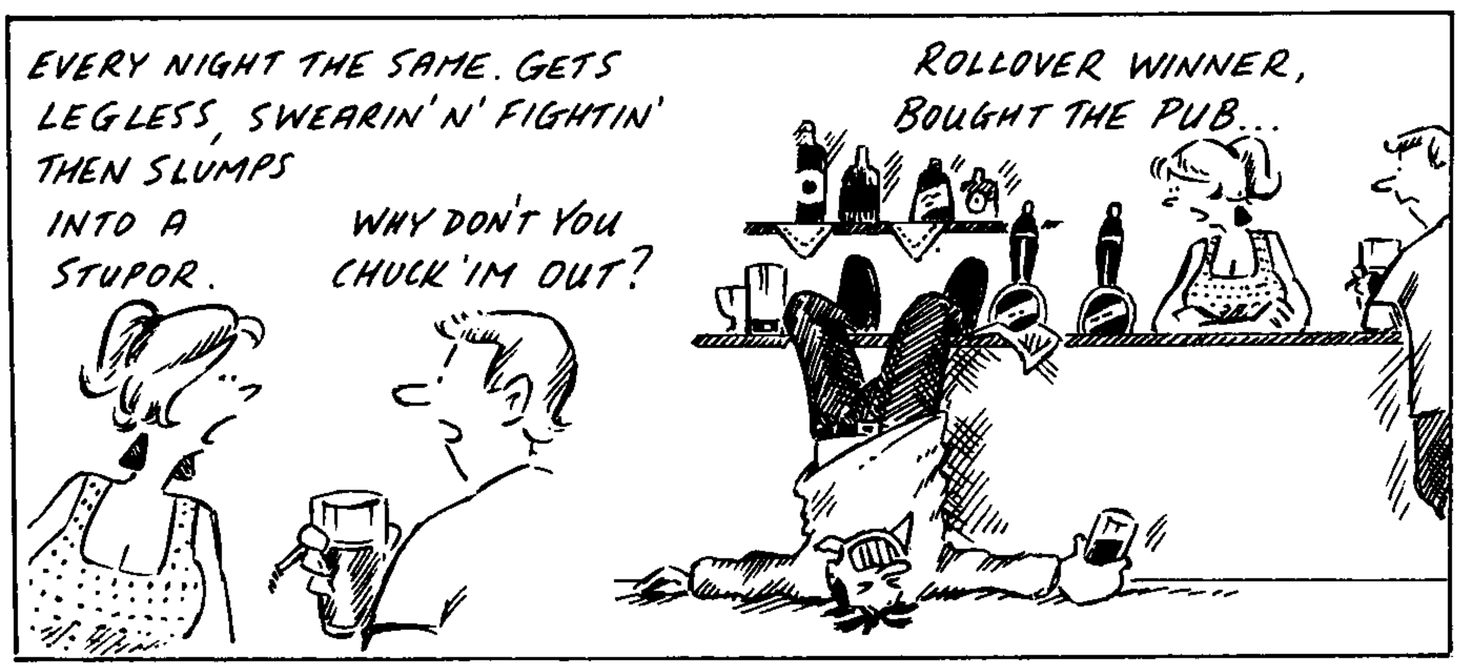
Winner: HARRIET WILLIS

ACROSS: 7 Utopia 8 Gestapo 10 Agreed 11 Spanking 12 Flashing 14 Martyr 15/5/25 Camilla Parker Bowles 17 Tristar 20 Des res 22 Liberal 24 Ambition 25 (see 15) 27 Eminence 28 Lapdog.

DOWN: 1 Stag 2 Apres-ski 3 Gandhi 4 Aga saga 5 (see 15) 6 County Hall 9 Slammer 13 Leaked memo 16 Lesbian 18 Screw up 19 Plonker 21 Reigns 23 Babble 26 Eton.

The Lottery Winners

TURNER


EVERY NIGHT THE SAME. GETS LEGLESS, SWEARIN' N' FIGHTIN' THEN SLUMPS INTO A STUPOR.
WHY DON'T YOU CHUCK 'IM OUT?
ROLLOVER WINNER, BOUGHT THE PUB...

ST ALBION PARISH NEWS

Incumbent: Rev. A.R.P. Blair MA (Oxon)

Hullo

It's good to be back! Even though the grass needs cutting and there's an enormous pile of mail sitting on the doormat!

Cherie and I had a really wonderful time in Italy and in France, and were given a royal welcome wherever we went! (Not literally, obviously!)

And I'll tell you something. Sitting in the glorious countryside of Tuscany, looking out at the olive groves, watching the children playing football in the sunshine, really does help put things into their true perspective!

And coming back, I find all the little things people get worked up about seem really very unimportant!

Look, does it really matter who builds the Millennium Marquee? Our local builders or a German or American firm? Surely the important thing is that we have one?

And does it matter whether Mr Prescott or Mr Mandelson reads out the notices and organises the flower-arranging roster while I'm away? The important thing is that I am back!

As it says in the Bible, "When the cat's away, the mice will play" *(Proverbs 13, v.8.)*.

Therefore, my message this week is a simple one. Let's keep our eyes on the Big Picture!

Where are we going and what are we trying to do? That's what we should be thinking about, and not all these petty little details that sidetrack us from our main purpose, which is surely to keep pressing on with our goals and visions towards the kind of St Albion's that we all want to build together!

Remember, the Big Picture is showing now! Don't miss it by fighting over your place in the queue for the popcorn!

Yours,

Tony

Sorry!

MRS SHORT has written to apologise for a silly remark she inadvertently made to our Wednesday evening discussion group, when she said that the money we are spending on the Millennium Tent should be sent to the Third World. Clare now realises after talking to Mr Mandelson that the Millennium Tent is a wonderful idea, and that man cannot live by bread alone! *(Or woman! TB)*

YOUR LETTERS

Dear Sir,

As a long-term member of the St Albion's team, who thought that he was a close personal friend of Tony's, I have been deeply saddened by the decision of the PCC to purchase a second-hand Amstrad computer when I advised them to buy an Apple Mac XD-400 which would have been a much better

yours sincerely,
Ken Follett

(For reasons of space it is sometimes necessary to cut letters. Alistair Campbell, Editor.)

+ + + PCC Elections + + +

THERE is a vacancy on the Domestic Steering Group of the PCC and various names have been put forward as suitable candidates.

It is not the vicar's place to tell parishioners who to vote for in these situations, so I shall be saying nothing. Except that I look forward to working with Mr Mandelson on the Steering Group as well as in all his other capacities.

TB

To Remember In Your Prayers

Mrs Margaret Cook. It's a very sad time for Margaret, and our thoughts are obviously with her. But it really doesn't help to dwell on the past and to keep writing letters about your husband to the newspapers. In the long term, the reality is that the most effective cure for this sort of heartache is to keep very, very quiet and not upset everybody.

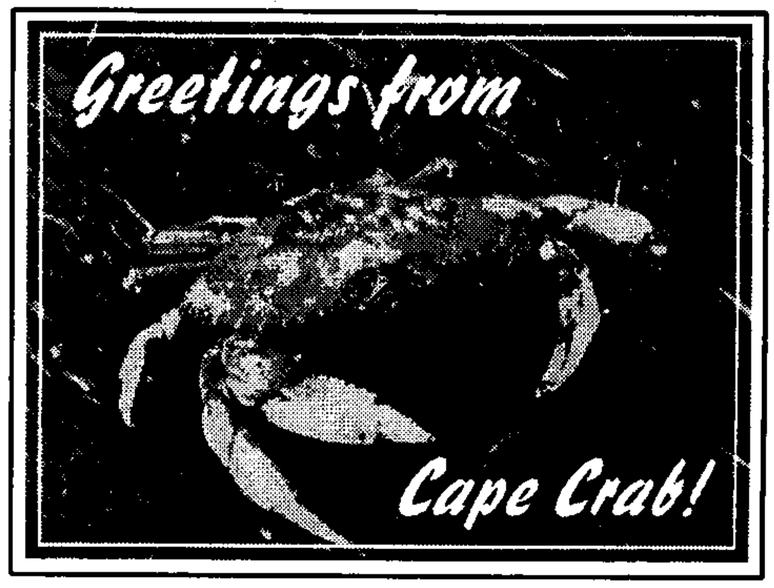
TB

A POSTCARD FROM OUR CHURCHWARDEN MR MANDELSON WHO IS IN AMERICA ON HIS HOLIDAY

May I remind everybody that no decisions regarding parish matters can be made in my absence. I have left Tony in charge, and he also has my mobile number should an emergency arise requiring my attention.

P.M.

* Copy to Mr Prescott at the Working Men's Club.



Notices

● The advertised talk to the Scottish Society by **Mr Tam Dalyell** on *"Why Scotland Must Remain Part of the Union"* has been cancelled due to lack of interest. (The first 300 to apply will have their ticket money refunded. PM)

Instead, we are very fortunate that **Miss Glenda Jackson** has agreed at short notice to give a talk on the joys of train travel, *"We're On The Right Track"*. Some older parishioners may remember Ms Jackson as Queen Elizabeth in the St Albion's Amateur Dramatic Society's 1957 production of Ruddigore.

● Due to overwork, **Mrs Short** will no longer be in charge of the **Montserrat Volcano Appeal**. We all, of course, appreciate how much Clare has done, but from now on Mr Cook will be in sole charge of this and all other outreach projects.

Verses By A Local Poet

Welcome back, Tony,
From your holiday in Italy.
This greeting is sincere
Though I've tried to do it wittily!
(And succeeded! TB)

M. Bragg, Upper VI
St Albion's Secondary

THE MIRROR SAYS

DO NOT blame the Mirror for this tragic event. The sleazy foreign paparazzi are entirely different from the good honest British snappers who provide pictures for decent newspapers like the Mirror. These paparazzi are filth. They are frogs, wops and assorted spivs who will stop at nothing to get their disgusting pictures of our beloved British Royalty.

We at the Mirror would not stoop so low. We just buy the pictures from them.

Reproduced from the Sun with the name changed.

Candle In The Wind

by Our Royal Correspondent Phillipa Space

AS the candles flicker in the wind, like Diana's brief candle flickered in the wind of our lives, and the chill wind of mortality makes each of our candles flicker as the wind flickers *(Get on with it. Ed.)*, there is only one word that can convey the emotion that is in each of our hearts. Thank you. Thank you for saving the livelihoods of thousands of journalists and helping literally millions of copies walk out of the shops. *(Go back to the candles. Ed.)* And so the candle finally *(continued in all papers all week)*

Don't Miss the Daily Gnome's 94-Page Diana Tribute Special. Including

☐ How the other press hounded Diana 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12

☐ How will Prince William cope with the terrible media attention? We doorstep him at the funeral 13

☐ Diana was not religious, but she was very religious really says Rev. J.C. Flannel 14

☐ Dr Stuttaford writes on the terrible grief of having to write huge pieces about grief 15-20

☐ Moving tribute from the Teletubbies 20-27

☐ Hastily written drivel 27-94

● PLUS:
What you will read next month!

● Were the brakes on the Mercedes tampered with by MI5 or MI6?

● Was it really Diana in the car?

● Etc, etc, etc.

HOUNDED TO DEATH BY THE WINDSORAZZI?

by Our Royal Staff **Phil Space**

WAS Diana a victim of the notorious Windsor rat pack who drove her to despair and forced her to leave the country by their continual acts of harassment.

"There is no one as ruthless as the Windsorazzi", said one Royal watcher, "when they get their prey in their sight. They may look harmless riding around on horses, but they will stop at nothing to get what they want."

"They wanted her out of the picture. And now they have got their way."

Highlights from the TV coverage

Sunday 3.17 p.m.

Martyn Lewis: ...so, you never met Diana but you must have some memories of her?

Man With Beard in Black Tie: I suppose my first reaction when I heard the news was one of shock and disbelief.

Martyn Lewis: So, your first reaction was one of shock and disbelief?

(Caption appears: "Dr Wilmot Pringle, former reader in Constitutional Studies, Strathclyde University")

Dr Pringle: Well, I er...

Martyn Lewis: Thank you for that, Dr Pringle, I am sure that all over the country viewers will be sharing your feelings of shock and disbelief. Now we've just heard that we can go over live to Balmoral...

Woman with microphone on windswept road: Well, Martyn, I am standing here on the windswept road where shortly the Royal car will arrive, possibly with the Queen and other members of the Royal Family on board, although we are not sure who will be with the Queen or if the Queen will actually come down this road to wherever it is she might be going.

Martyn Lewis: Well, thank you, Jenny. And it's not hard to imagine what the Queen must be feeling at this tragic and historic time, wherever she is. Now I am joined in the studio by Anthony Holden, David Mellor, Ben Pimlott, Jeffrey Archer, Richard Branson, Roy Jenkins, Jeffrey Archer, Jim Callaghan, Richard Branson, Anthony Holden and Jeffrey Archer. *(Men in black ties and suits look serious)*

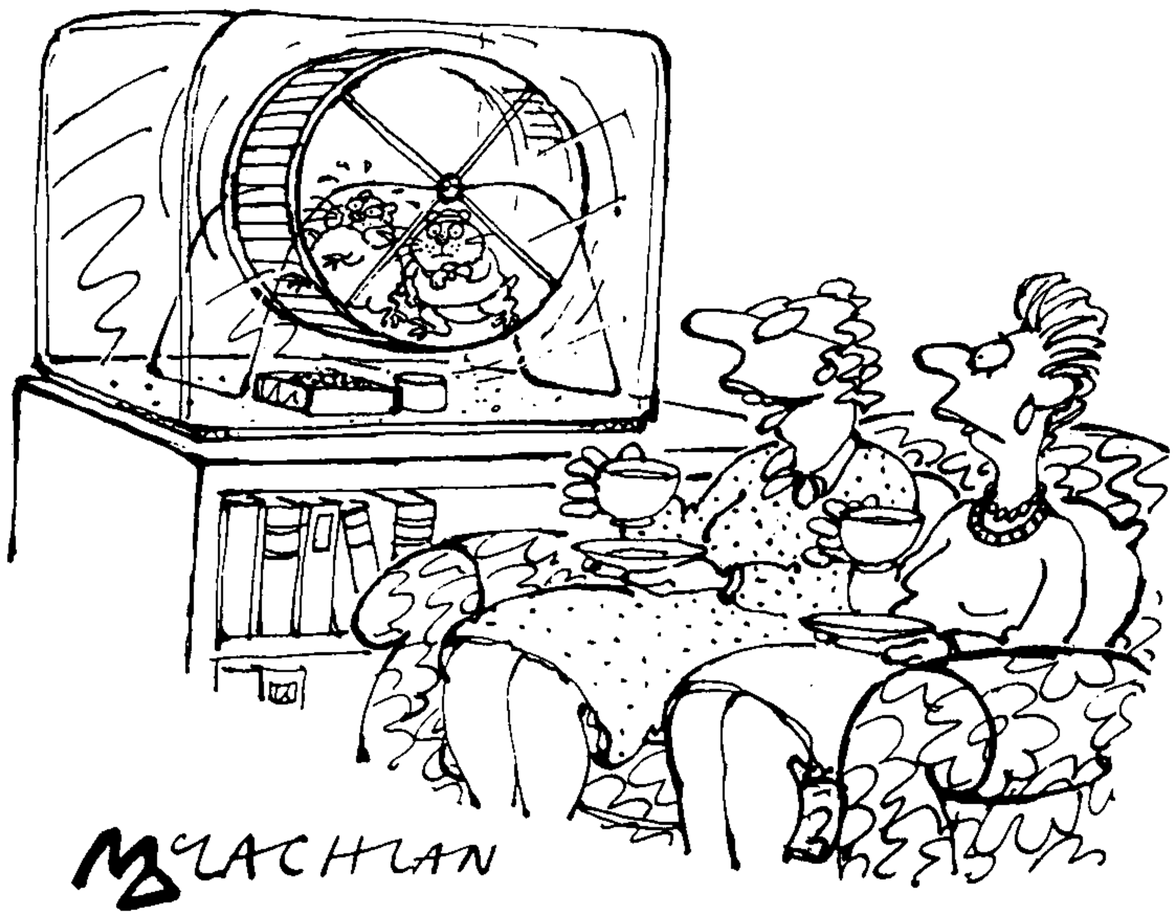
Gentlemen, can I begin by asking you how you all felt when you were asked to come on this programme?

All: I suppose our first reaction was one of shock and disbelief since we have nothing worthwhile to say at all.

Martyn Lewis: Thank you, gentlemen, for your thoughts on this most tragic day. And we are now getting tributes from all over the world; the Life President of Rumbabwe has said in the last hour that his reaction to the news was one of "shock and disbelief on this most tragic day"; Dr Kissinger told reporters that he was shocked and disbelieving at the news on this most tragic day; and William Hague and Paddy Ashdown said that they were equally shocked and disbelieving as Tony Blair.

Now over to Los Angeles where Billy Connelly and Pamela Stephenson are *(continued for several weeks)*

"No pictures!"



"It came with its own fitness trainer"

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

Letters to the Editor

Beatles vs Oasis

SIR—As someone who has been involved at a senior level in the musical entertainment world for more than forty years, I wish to register the strongest possible protest at the present state of so-called "pop" music.

When I turn on my wireless set and my ears are assaulted by the cacophonous din and tuneless twangings of such "groups" as the Oasis, the U2 and the self-styled "Spicey Girls", the epithets which naturally spring to one's mind are "jungle music", "mindless drivel" and "ineffable balderdash".

What a far cry this is from the golden age of popular singing associated with the nineteen hundred and sixties and such unforgettable tunes as "I'm a Red Hot Swinging Perve" composed by myself and performed by the combo of which I had the honour to be the lead singer, the immortal Turds. I am sure few of your readers will need reminding that my fellow artists on that masterpiece of the recording art were, apart from myself, the late "Ozzie" Mandias, "Mullie" Kintyre (now Lord Strathgoblin) and "Dave" Smudge (now Sir David Smudge, chairman of Smudge Industries).

Those of us who have been out East and partaken of a few exotic substances know only too well how difficult it is to concentrate on anything for any length of time. Where was I?

SIR SPIGISMOND GUSSETT-TOPES,
The Old Yellow Submarine,
Harrison St George,
Henley-on-Thames.

The CARNIVAL Collection

Casual Wear for the '90s from
Racing Gnome's Mail Order Catalogue

FOR HIM

❶ A cool, relaxed "Youngster" shirt* in trendy, stonewashed denim for that "weekend in Portobello look". **£7.90** ❷ Hand-stitched, full-length "Hipster" Chino-style slacks in washable Gnomeskin™. **£11.95**

**Colour Range: Blue*

FOR HER

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❹Tropical, wrinkle-resistant "Clare Shorts" in 100% organic cotton give the garment that "worn-in look". **£8.60**

Celeb

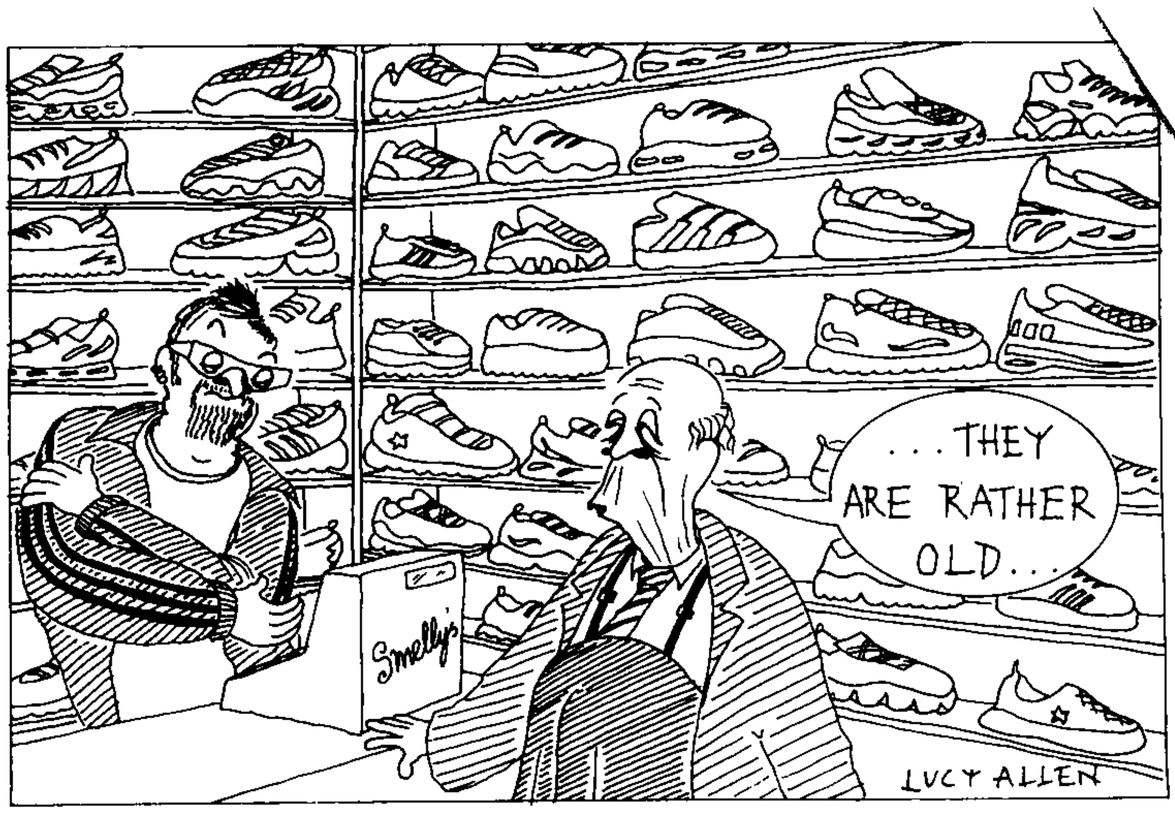
LIGGER

YOU'LL LIVE TO REGRET HAVING YOUR NOSE PIERCED, TROY. YOU JUST DON'T THINK DO YOU?
IT LOOKS COOL, DAD. ESPECIALLY HAVING ONE ON EITHER SIDE...
BUT WHAT'S GOING TO HAPPEN IN YEARS TO COME WHEN NOSE STUDS GO OUT OF FASHION, EH?
I'LL TAKE THEM OUT.
AND END UP WITH TWO HOLES IN YOUR HOOTER! YOU'LL LOOK STUPID, SON!
ESPECIALLY WHEN SNORTING... IT'LL ALL SHOOT STRAIGHT OUT THE SIDES...
SHIT. I HADN'T THOUGHT OF THAT...

Advertisement

JOIN THE ARMY!

Please, oh go on... look you won't have to get up early in the morning or anything like that, honest, and we promise you we won't shout at you, even if you make a mistake, and don't worry about all that marching and climbing over things, and getting muddy, no, there'll be none of that, it'll be really nice, honestly, and if you don't want to learn how to shoot with those horrid guns, don't worry, we won't make you, I mean, they have been known to go off occasionally which is a bit scary, but there will be none of that nonsense in the British Army, I assure you...



J.R. Hartley tries to find something called "shoes"

POPULAR TV CHARACTERS MADE TO SPEAK PROPER ENGLISH

by Our Teletubby Staff
Ned Tinky-Winky

THE stars of the BBC programme Eastenders are to be made to speak proper English, after complaints that the language in the show was affecting the nation's youth.

Said a television watchdog: "We can't have the nation's children addressing each other in the mindless manner we see every other night on our television sets. Already, we hear 'awright?' instead of hallo. 'See ya la'er' for goodbye, and 'slag!' for anything in a skirt. It simply isn't good enough, and there is clear proof that the programme's style of spoken English is spreading. If it ain't sawted pronto, there's gonna be a bit of bovver — know whad I mean?"

Harry Enfield's **Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath** 20.

"Good afternoon Mr Hill it is Mr Hill isn't it Sir? Mr D. Hill Sir? No Sir? And from our accent I presume we aren't Mr Schumacher either Sir? We're not Sir? Well well well we must be Mr Blunkett then are we Sir? Though I see no sign of our guide dog, but I'm right to assume that we're partially sighted Sir? We're not? Now we surprise me Sir! Then can we explain why we failed to notice the speed we were doing? We were doing ninety-four miles per hour Sir! That's right Sir! And am I speaking German Sir? Very good Sir! I'm not! I'm speaking English aren't I Sir? Do you know why that should be the case Sir? That's right Sir! I'm in England! Now we're getting somewhere aren't we Sir? And on English motorways we drive at what speed Sir? That's right Sir! We are a clever Sir! So how do we explain the twenty-four mile an hour discrepancy? We can't can we Sir? Ever been to Norway Sir? Neither have I Sir! Can we sing Sir? Not very well? Neither can I Sir! If you and I sung for Norway in the Eurovision Song Contest we'd probably get nil points wouldn't we Sir? Ha ha! Yes we would — I tell you what, I'm not going to be as mean as the Eurovision judges, Sir, I'm going to give you trois points — that's French for three points Sir! Goodness me, Sir! France, Germany, Norway — we've been whizzing around all over the place, haven't we Sir! As you were until I stopped you step out of the car please..."

THOSE MI5 FILES IN FULL

THE subversive suspects who were secretly monitored by Britain's top security service.

Enoch Powell. MI5 believed Enoch was a communist agent recruited when he was a Greek professor at the University of Sydney. They collected his left-wing speeches in a huge file which was lost on a No. 15 bus by the then director, Sir Roderick Gaytrouser, known as "G".

Valerie Singleton. MI5 were convinced the popular presenter was sending coded messages to her Russian controller via the children's TV programme "Blue Peter".

Denis Compton. MI5 kept a file of Compton's test scores which, they believed, when added together would give them the private telephone number of the Head of the KGB.

Marje Proops. MI5 suspected that the Mirror agony aunt's real name was Margarita Proposkaya who had been brainwashed during her 25 years in the Gulag and sent back to Britain as a "sleeper".

Red Rum. MI5 were working on the theory that the famous racehorse's name was proof of his communist sympathies. Agents attempted to follow him in the Grand National but were usually left behind. *(That's enough. Ed.)*

Information supplied by ex-top MI5 officer Dave Thick.

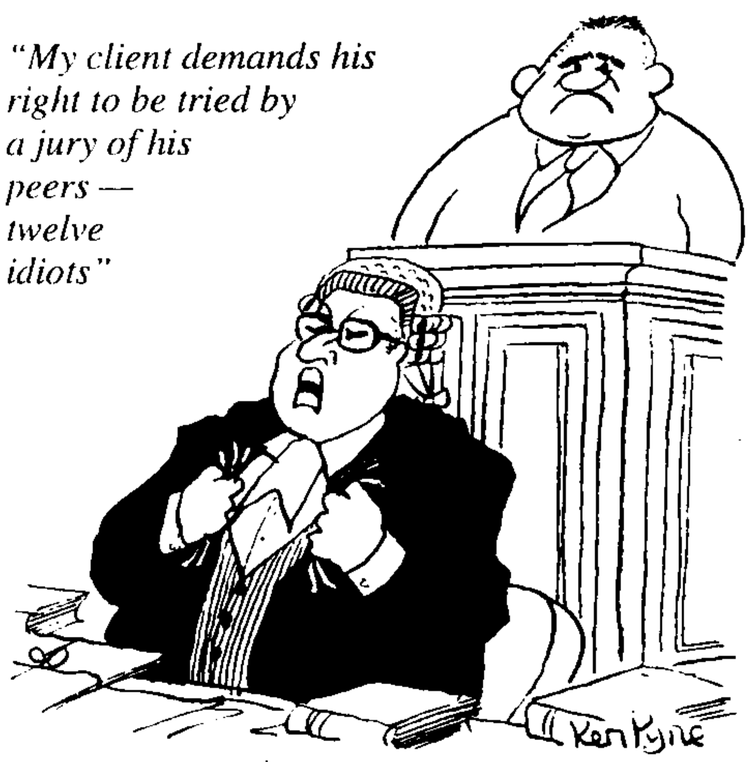
MANDELSON DENIES 'MI5 SMEAR'

by Our Political Staff **Phil Space**

PETER MANDELSON, the Minister Without Portfolio, yesterday responded angrily to new evidence revealing that he was the victim of MI5 surveillance. Mr Mandelson was targeted by the security services as a result of his alleged involvement with a left-wing movement in the 1970s.

A spokesman for Mr Mandelson said: "Peter is very upset about these smears and denies that he had any dealings during the period with the British Labour Party. Peter would like to make it clear that he is not now, nor has he ever been, a member of the Labour Party."

"My client demands his right to be tried by a jury of his peers — twelve idiots"



Notes & Queries

QUESTION: What is the derivation of the phrase "the full Monty"?

☐ Reader Mrs Applebaum is grotesquely misinformed when she claimed that the phrase originated in the multiple cap-badges worn on his beret by the late Field Marshall Montgomery of Al-Fayed.

In fact, the term has a much older derivation and originated in Canada, where members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were always given a large breakfast of maple waffles and chocolate mousse before being sent out "to get their man", which they always did. As the gallant officers of the law galloped across the snowy wastes, the citizens would remark: "Look — there goes a full Mountie". The French-speaking inhabitants of Quebec, unable to reproduce the exact phonetics of the English original, developed a patois version uniquely their own: "Voila, un full Monté". — *'Scotty' Fearnley-Whittingstall, 2nd Log Cabin on the Right, Pink Salmon Creek, Manitoba.*

☐ Mr Fearnley-Whittingstall is an idiot, as his name suggests. His preposterous theory is, of course, complete rubbish. "The full Monty" goes back to the visit of the great diarist John Evelyn to Venice, where he heard a performance of Monteverdi's celebrated Vespers at the Church of Santa Barbara di Folletti in 1645. The performance of the work in its original version lasted well over two days, which Monteverdi then cut down to its current four-hour version. On his return to England, Dr Johnson was asked which version of the work he had heard. The great doctor replied, "Why, sir, I heard the full Monte". *S. Rachmaninov (no address).*

☐ I cannot believe that you have published that rubbish by Rachmaninov. Is there anyone in this country so feeble-minded and cretinous that they do not know that "the full Monty" is of comparatively recent origin and is a phrase current among aficionados of the classic television comedy series *Monty Python and His Flying Circus*. Having "the full Monty" means possessing a complete collection of the videos of the series and being able to recite them verbatim to fellow customers in public houses. Anyone who does not know this should be shot. *Prof. John Cleese, Business Training Videos 'R Us, Euston.*

☐ My God, your readers really are a lot of mentally retarded morons. I have never read so much piffle as has been contained in the correspondence over the phrase "the full Monty". Let me make it clear once and for all to the sub-literates and ignoramuses who contribute to your so-called newspaper that the expression dates from the Castilian custom in the 18th Century whereby the local orange farmers had to have all their produce checked by an overseer from the provincial capital of Fulmonte. If the fruit were deemed to meet the exacting requirements of the orange growers co-operative, the villagers would shout in delight, "the man from Fulmonte, he say yes", because they knew they could then sell the whole crop. *Rev. Sydney Prawn, Colditz Castle, Northants.*

NEXT WEEK: Are snails born with their shells? Was the Duchess of Windsor really a man? Is infinity a number? Why is Frank Johnson still editor of the Spectator?

Daily Mail

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 1997

35p

WIN UP TO £75,000
SUMMER INSTANT CASH
TODAY'S AMOUNT: PAGE 41

BLAIR FLIES HOME TO FACE CATASTROPHE

by Our Political Staff
PETER TORY

PRIME Minister Tony Blair, looking shocked and ashen-faced beneath his Tuscany tan, dramatically cut short his three-week holiday yesterday after only three weeks.

Looking tense and relaxed, troubled Tony last night returned to Britain to face the worst political crisis of his life.

His government is in tatters, his ministers are at each other's throats, and his popularity rating has slumped to a mere 97 per cent.

Bad Blair Day

This was the catalogue of horrors that was awaiting the hapless Blair when he put down his suitcases at Number 10 last night.

● **All-out war has erupted between Deputy Leader Prescott and the Party's sinister spin doctor Peter Mandelson since Prescott compared Mandy to a crab.**

● **A furious Mandelson has lashed back by saying nothing at all.**

● **Ms Clare Short has made an astonishing gaffe by admitting publicly that New Labour could not stop the volcano in Montserrat erupting.**

● **England have suffered a humiliating win in the Test Match.**

Make no mistake. Not even Blair can survive a disaster of these proportions.

After just six long months of Socialist rule, it is time for Tony Blair and his discredited, sleaze-ridden government to step down and make way for John Major.

Reprinted from the Daily Telegraph

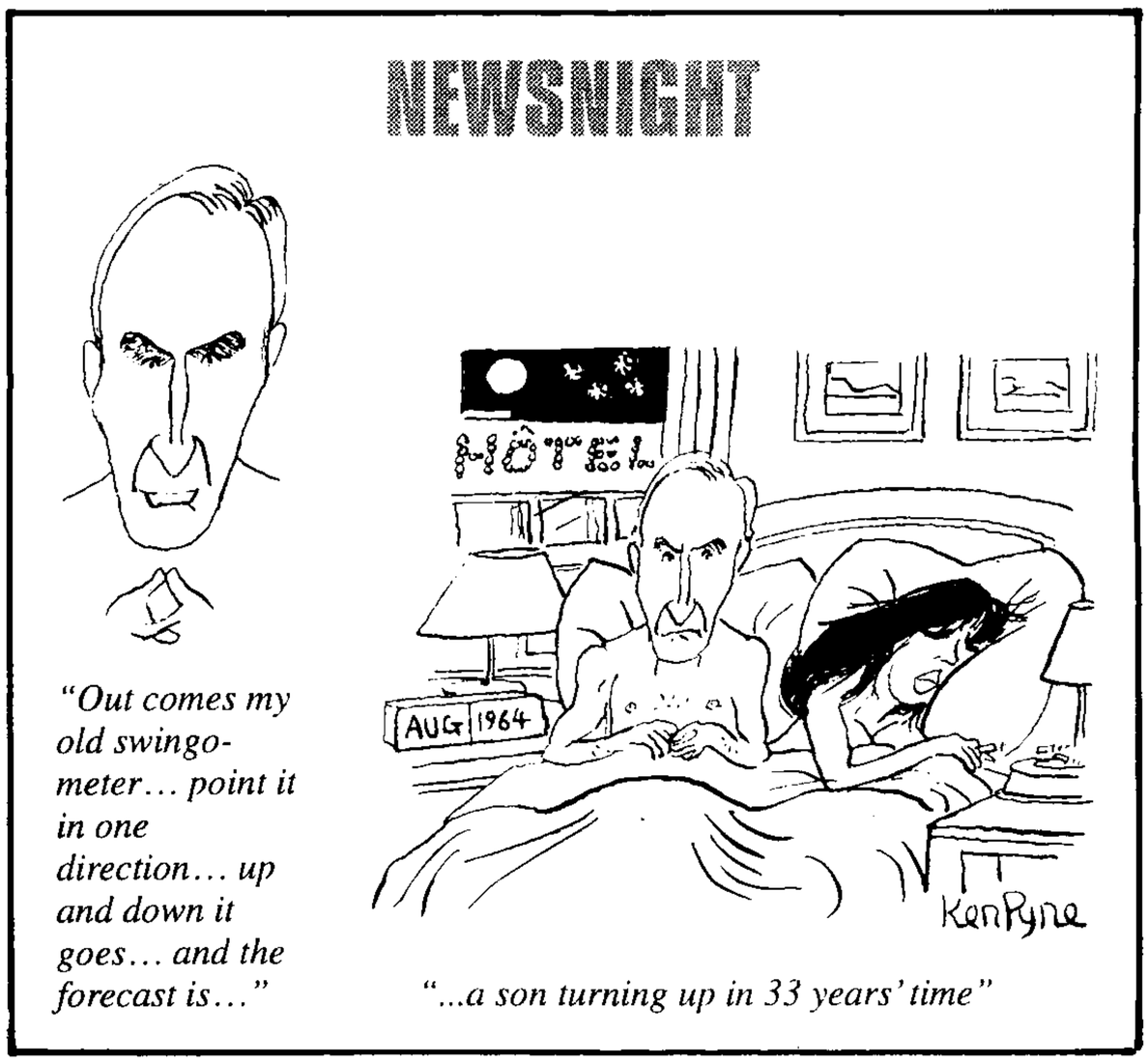
ON OTHER PAGES Is Mandelson the Most Evil Man Who Has Ever Lived? asks Bruce Anderson ● How Dare Clare Patronise the Coons in Montserrat? asks Paul Johnson 2 ● Is Cherie Heading for Nervous Breakdown? A Femail Special 9 ● Aren't Tony's Good-Goody Kids Ghastly? Another Femail Special 11 ● PLUS Travel: Why Blackpool is Much Better Than Tuscany, Where Tony Goes 14 ● Health: Why Getting a Tan like Tony's Will Kill Him, We Hope 18 ● PLUS Unfunny Blair on Holiday Cartoon by Sprog.

A Taxi Driver writes

EVERY week a well-known cab driver is asked to comment on an issue of topical importance. This week: The Situation in the British Dependent Territory of Montserrat by **Ms Clare Short** (Cab No. 24621).

They gotta nerve, haven't they? Those darkies. Just because some volcano blows up, they think they've won the Lottery. Blimey! Hardly our fault that they chose to live there, is it? We've given them everything they could want. Free one-way trip to Britain. Jobseekers' allowance off the DSS. Cushy little council flat in Brixton. What will they be asking for next? Free elephants on the National Health? Golden Syrup for everyone? Know what *I'd* do with those whingeing Montsa-whatsits? I'd take 'em up the volcano and push 'em in. That's the only language people like that understand. Look at that bloke trying to park his Discovery! Men drivers, they shouldn't be allowed on the road...

NEXT WEEK: Harry Harman (Cab No. 426) on Why Single Mothers Should Be Ashamed Of Themselves.

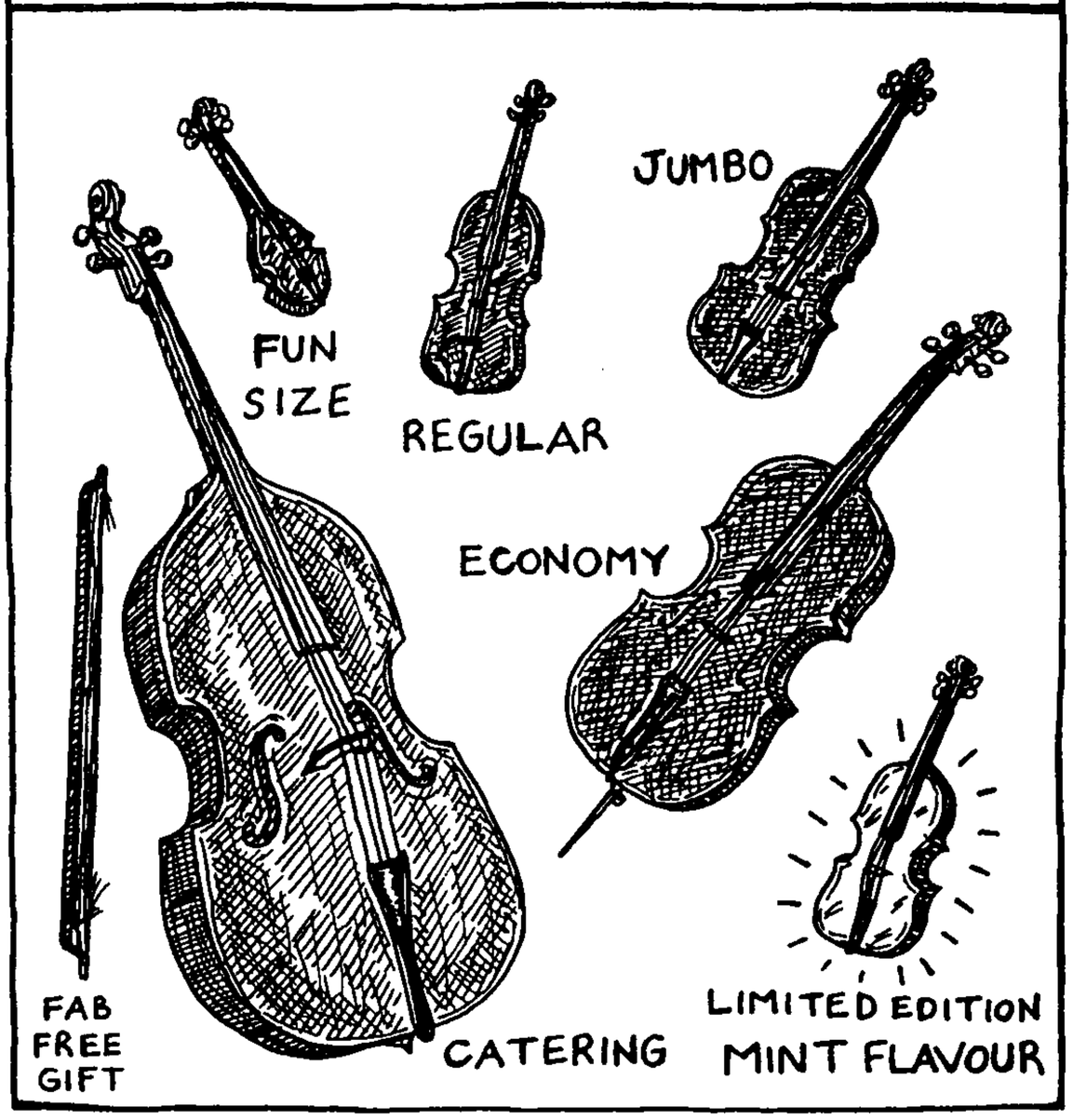


"Out comes my old swingo-meter... point it in one direction... up and down it goes... and the forecast is..."

"...a son turning up in 33 years' time"

Apparently... BY MIKE BARFIELD

A MARKETING MAN'S GUIDE TO THE ORCHESTRA



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

VICTIM OF THE MONTH

VICTORIA BRITTAN is a humble, very rich journalist working for the Guardian. Yet she has been made the victim of a vicious smear campaign. Her phone has been tapped by the hated British State Security Police (MI5). Her only crime was to befriend a Ghanaian minister, Mr Banjo Machete, and allow him to use her Abbey National account as a deposit facility for hundreds of thousands of pounds donated by innocent Libyan "freedom fighters". The money was then quite properly used to try and stop the Independent writing about human abuse violations in Mr Machete's Ghana.

A candle-lit vigil will be held outside the offices of MI5, led by Alan Rusbridger on 7 September. All are welcome.

After 20 Years I'm Still In Love

says TV's Esther Rantzen

Exclusive to all papers — the Love Story of the Century

AFTER 20 blissful years I looked across the breakfast table today and saw the most wonderful person in my life.

Someone I have never failed to find fascinating, witty, attractive and sympathetic through all the trials and tribulations of the passing years.

Someone who combines every virtue in one extraordinary personality.

"Stop looking at yourself in the mirror," said

my husband Desmond. "I don't know why we have to have a mirror in the kitchen anyway."

Read the full heartwarming story of Esther's lifelong love affair with herself in whichever paper she can sell this rubbish to.

"Just what kind of soldiers were you expecting?"

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

TRAVEL AGENT
WE'RE FASHION EDITORS, WE HAVE TO LOOK GOOD....
...SO WE NEED TO GO AWAY AND GET A NICE COLOUR.
YOU WANT TO GET BROWN EH?
NO, GREY. IT'S THE NEW BROWN!

During the five-and-a-half-month scam, the fraudsters regularly spelt the word "sincerely" as "sincerely" and "forty" was misspelt "forty".

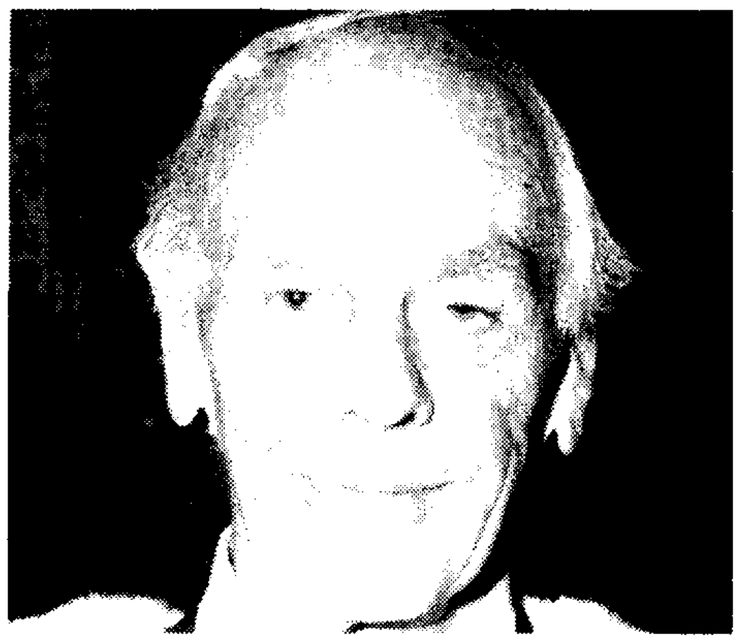
Police alerted banks across the country to look out for such misspelt letters.

Travel Weekly

Stewart Collins was born at an early age near the top end of London's Northern Line.

Osborne House (IoW) programme

DIARY



W.F. DEEDES

AT times like these, the nation looks to a rallying-point, a wise man, a dear old friend, for the strength and comfort that a time-honoured man of letters can provide. And I am happy to have been of service. If I was forced to guess, I would say that it was my undoubted dignity, my gravitas borne of years of comment and my overwhelming personal integrity that the television and radio boffins were seeking when they beseeched me to make a few comments for no more than five hours on the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales.

For many countless millions, that day will probably be etched on their minds forever as the day Bill Deedes, veteran sage, commented so unselfishly on the death of a Royal Princess. My first appearance was on Talk Radio, between reminiscences from Billy Connolly and Lynsey de Paul, then on Radio 5 Live, straight after comment from Michael Parkinson, Dale Winton and Lord Archer, and, to round up my morning session, a special guest appearance on an extended edition of GMTV, mourning the tragedy alongside Vanessa Feltz, Ginger Spice and three of the Teletubbies.

"Lord Deedes," the presenter would say, "you knew the Princess well. Your thoughts on this tragic day?"

"She was above all a Princess," I would reply, looking up towards the heavens to signal that my words were born of deep thought and shrewd analysis, "of that there can be no doubt. And she was recognised as such throughout the world. And let us never forget that she was also a mother. And I have it on good authority, from an old friend of the family, that she was only young when she met with her untimely death — somewhere in her mid-thirties, would be my shrewdest guess." I then half-closed one eye, to signal that my considered overview of the situation was about to be delivered. By this time, those in the studios were on what in my day we used to call tenterhooks.

"You know, it is my judgement on occasions such as this that we should ask ourselves a lot of questions," I intoned, "but not before we have had time to answer them."

And then it was straight on to lend my own particular words of wisdom to the afternoon bulletins, alongside other veteran broadcasters such as Russell Grant, Gary Glitter and Mr Pastry.

What a remarkable device the camera has proved to be. Not only can it be transported everywhere, but it also takes photographs. It struck me that I had never set eyes on photographs of some of the great events in Our Island Story. There is no photograph of King Alfred burning those estimable cakes, for instance. Nor of Sir Walter Raleigh placing his cloak over the famous puddle. Why?

Stumped, I phoned the Chairman of Kodak, a firm well-known, I am told, for its cameras. He told me that the camera was invented comparatively recently. Fascinating stuff. This meant that any aspirant photographers around at the time of Good Queen Bess would have had to make do without a camera. Hence, no snaps.

I wonder how the newspapers of today would cope without photographs? I fancy a lot of blank white squares might put off modern readers, who have grown used to their fill of pictures. *Plus ça change.*

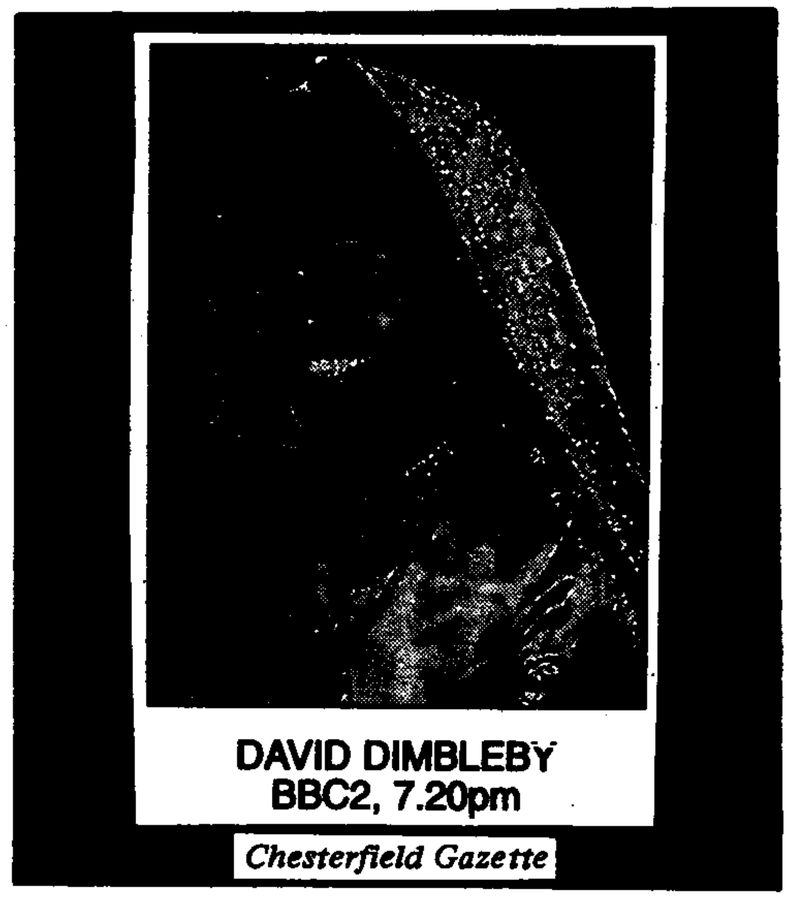
Bosnia is a largish country, occupied by many hundreds, possibly thousands, of people. As the poet said, 'twas ever thus. It's hard to see what the present bother is all about. When I was in Government, we never mentioned it. But then in those days, the Cabinet would meet only once every two to three years, generally over a five course meal or around a swimming pool. I sometimes wonder whether our present to-ing and fro-ing makes for better government. There can be no easy solution to the present troubles in that hard-pressed region of the globe. But we might be wise to pay more heed to that old adage I learnt on my old nanny's lap: ignore it, and eventually it'll disappear. *Plus ça change.*

Am I alone in noticing how shops are getting bigger? These days, there are a great many big shops, known as "supermarkets". Their shelves are packed with food products great and small. But it is impossible for even a veteran shopper like myself to buy anything in them. On a recce of our local "supermarket", I approached a young lady behind a till. I asked her for a loaf of her freshest bread, a tube of her finest toothpaste (excellent stuff for cleaning teeth — well worth a try) and a can of freshly baked beans. She looked at me with a blank look characteristic, alas, of today's shopgirls. Seconds later, I caught sight of numerous housewives, apparently unobserved, pushing wirey metal containers on wheels, each containing a mountain of products taken without a by your leave from the surrounding shelves. I immediately ran to a telephone and rang my friend Lord Sainsbury to inform him urgently as to what was going on. "Come quickly," I whispered, "I have reason to believe a raid is in progress."

I waited and waited, but still nothing happened. If even Lord Sainsbury is happy to turn a blind eye to poor service and continuous robbery, where does that leave the rest of us? I rather fear the "supermarket" has no future, and most of us will remain content with the old-fashioned corner shop. *Plus ça change.*

It's all change at Number 10. After Margaret Thatcher came John Major. And after John Major, Tony Blair. Tony Blair now stands in a long line of those who have held Prime Ministerial office. They're something of a mixed bunch. Some do it better than others, of that there can be no doubt. But how will Tony Blair manage? There's no doubt about it: we must wait and see. *Plus ça change.*

"Can you do something, Doctor? I'm having a dinner party tonight"



DAVID DIMBLEBY
BBC2, 7.20pm

Chesterfield Gazette

Literary Review

It can't last

Enduring Love
Ian McEwan
(Cape, £15.99)

ALL THIS has been going on for a long time now. In fact, a quick saunter along the library shelves discloses that it's more than 20 years since Ian McEwan produced the first collection of those endearingly nasty short stories that made his name.

With their deep-frozen monologues and their zealous engagements in the sex war, *First Love, Last Rites* (1975) and its successor *In Between The Sheets* (1978), simply hummed with life and promise. There was a fab early novella too (*The Cement Garden*, 1978), choc-full of macabre goings on — incest, death, you know the kind of thing — but with scarcely a word out of place.

After which, after which... Well, to be perfectly fair, having exhausted this particular vein, our Ian — who was, is, and will presumably ever more remain a huge critic's darling — searched round for something else to write about. The women's movement looked good for a while — see *The Comfort of Strangers*, 1981, in which some unpleasant events in Venice are balanced by chatter about the female orgasm — as did the bomb (a libretto for Michael Berkeley's oratorio *Or Shall We Die?*). Children (McEwan was married by now) and science fathered *The Child in Time* (1987), to be replaced by the cold war (*The Innocent*, 1990) and the end of the cold war (*Black Dogs*, 1992). Since then it's all been a tad quiet (revolutions in the personal life, etc) and, leaving aside a children's novel three years back, this is Ian's first fictional offering in half a decade.

Ian McEwan's problem, since the vertiginous dazzle of his early books, has always been an inability to decide whether he's Saul Bellow or Graham Greene. His "mature" novels, consequently, present the alarming spectacle of a human heart merchant — and make no mistake, this is a high-class anatomist of the intelligent person's relationship — trying to embellish his work with tricks from other genres. All with very mixed results. *The Child in Time*, for instance, fell apart as soon as it tried to become a political satire; *The Innocent* — an otherwise convincing love story — looked decidedly shaky from the moment its protagonist packed the dismembered corpse into the suitcase.

Funnily enough, *Enduring Love* follows exactly the same pattern: human heart stuff, sympathetically characterised and observed, ruined by the application of goofy psychothrillerdom. A brilliant opening chapter finds our hero — a fortysomething science writer called Joe — and his long-term girlfriend Clarissa, witnessing a ballooning accident on the Berkshire Downs in which a doctor named Logan is killed attempting to prevent a child from being lofted away. Another witness — shifty, long-haired Jed — promptly announces that he's fallen in love with Joe, and spends the next 200 pages stalking him.

The condition, which McEwan has researched with all his usual diligence, goes under the name of de Clérambault's syndrome. As you might expect, what with the stakeouts outside the apartment and the five letters a day, this has a wearing (and well-observed) effect on Joe and Clarissa's relationship. Joe also gets involved with Logan's widow, who imagines her husband's presence there to be evidence of infidelity (but where was the chick? — Mrs Logan is desperate to know). All this — just about — one could believe. To garnish it, though, comes a riot of nonsense about restaurant shootings (Joe, watching an attempt to waste a fellow diner, is convinced that it's Jed's hirelings getting the wrong man), firearms — a ludicrous scene in which Joe buys a gun from a gang of ex-hippies — hostage takings and a final bloody denouement. It doesn't work.

Elsewhere, the incidental, last chapter explanation of the late Dr Logan's innocence creaks, as the late Maurice Richardson might have said, like a pair of stays donated by Agatha Christie to Oxfam. Some musings about science raise their head, sniff the air and then go away again. Even the de Clérambault stuff hardly has the tang of originality — for a start it formed a key motif of Jane Asher's *The Longing*, published last year and just out in paperback (HarperCollins £5.99), and Ms Asher's account of a woman fixating herself on her doctor has quite as much conviction as bug-eyed and loopy Jed.

A wider question remains. What is it about that cluster of middle-aged male novelists — Ackroyd, Amis, Barnes, Swift and McEwan — who lent such lustre to the fiction scene a decade and a half ago? Why have they all so conspicuously blown it? The word is that Mart's new one (out in October) is distinctly iffy. When, too, can we expect the pundits to wake up to this depressing fact? As I remarked earlier, McEwan is a critic's pet, and one can expect at least half-a-dozen fearless young gentlemen in the public prints to go into positive ecstasies over this one. And, of course, (20 years into the career now, twice previously shortlisted, Graham had it last year, 'Isn't it about time, we...?') the Booker beckons.

"We both know this is casual sex but do you have to keep whistling?!"

CONSUMER NEWS

"UNBIASED ADVICE" promised by the Consumer Association's (CA) *Which?* magazine looked unlikely when their feature "We Name the Best Credit Cards" included the CA's own card (*Eye* 929).

One concerned *Which?* reader wrote to the mag, asking what it intended to do about this. *Which?* customer services man Stuart Hunt replied: "In terms of recommending our products as best buys, CA's research department is independent from its commercial division. CA's council has also established an independent external audit panel, which annually reviews and reports back to the council on our research."

The CA's magazine is independent of the CA's commercial division and is checked on by the CA's audit panel. So that, as they say, is all right, then.

LADS AND LADMEN

WHEN Condé Nast md Nicholas Coleridge replaced bookish *GQ* editor Angus MacKinnon with the nasally challenged James Brown from *loaded*, he reassured staff that Brown was now a grown-up — and had a fiancée and mortgage to prove it. Whoops!

Early last week, while Coleridge was still on holiday, Brown had a long lunch with henchman Martin Deeson and gorgeous, pouting *Observer* hackette Barbara Ellen. On their return the tired and emotional lads tried to goose startled *Voguettes* in the lift before continuing their revelry in the office.

As more drink and other substances were taken, a row broke out in the editor's office and Brown tempestuously threw a wine bottle. Unfortunately it hurtled against a large plate glass window which promptly shattered and sent shards of glass cascading into Hanover Square and over a parked car.

When Coleridge returned from his hols three furious company directors went to see him, told him the facts and demanded that something be done about Brown. Since a sacking would coincide with Brown's first issue and acknowledge how ludicrous his appointment was in the first place, Coleridge resisted the call. But the perma-grin MD became so livid he was unable to set eyes on Brown for two whole days. The honeymoon is well and truly over...

SNIPCOCK & TWEED
LET'S JUST HOPE THAT EVERYONE NOW LEAVES THE ROYALS ALONE
EDITORIAL
THEN THERE'LL BE NO COMPETITION FOR OUR BOOK!
DIANA
DEATH OF A FAIRYTALE
PASTE

footnotes

A MIRACLE!

Church Commissioners make £80m vanish

WELLS: 'Exciting'

AS PREDICTED by the *Eye* more than a year ago (902), the Tester Report into the amazing feat of the Church Commis-sioners in losing £80m on a ridiculous property speculation at Ashford, Kent, is a mild affair.

Mr Tester is a former partner of KPMG and was appointed to carry out his inquiry by the chairman of the Church's Audit Committee, Mr Alan McLintock, a senior partner in, er, KPMG.

Mr Tester is unhappy about certain details of the Ashford catastrophe, not least the fact that the church, ostensibly in partnership with a gang of property speculators, managed to shoulder all of the risk while the speculators were responsible for none of it.

Tester concludes, and McLintock rapidly agrees, that there is absolutely no point in trying to recover any of the money by suing the advisers who were so enthusiastic about the development. This will come as a profound relief to the blue-blooded estate agents Chestertons, whose senior partner William Wells warmly recommended the Ashford project to the commissioners in a report in 1988 ("excellently based"... "exciting opportunity"... "high class mixed-use development"... "satisfactory margin between cost and value", ie nice fat profit in the offing). Mr Wells was also very confident that planning permission, which was vital to the development, would present no real problem.

Almost as soon as the Commissioners decided to go ahead with the project, Chestertons were appointed "project consultants". Over the next few years, as planning permission was refused and the project stumbled from chaos to disaster, Chestertons were paid £1.5m in fees. Indeed, most of the wasted church money went on fees to professional advisers — including nearly £1m to city solicitors Linklaters & Paines. Goldman Sachs, stockbrokers, got £1,028,000 for "financial marketing" and Imry, the property speculators who inspired the whole fiasco in the first place (and then went into receivership), £2,008,000. Altogether about £17m was shelled out in fees for "professional services" which provided for the Church no return whatsoever.

PS: William Wells of Chestertons is now Sir William. He was knighted last year "for services to health" in his other role as chairman of the South Thames Health Authority.

High Principals

Going, going, Gorringe

■ **WHEN lecturer Jim Fogarty dared to publicise his worries about the mystery of £160,000 public money missing from Bedford College's account, he was frogmarched off the campus by security guards.**

The order came from the principal, Richard Gorringe, a keen contestant for the *Eye*'s Sacker of the Year Award. Since he took office two years ago half the teaching staff have gone.

Mr Fogarty read in the accounts that £160,000 had been "written off" after a plan for a new building had been abandoned. He passed on his worries to his local paper, *Bedfordshire on Sunday*. He was summoned to Mr Gorringe's study, and told he had been found guilty of "passing bad news to a newspaper". He was suspended from his job and only allowed back on campus after promising not to talk to the press.

SACKER:Gorringe

Intrigued, the *Eye* asked Mr Gorringe what happened to the vanishing £160,000 and why Mr Fogarty had been punished. The answer was in the highest traditions of freedom of speech and accountability for which the newly-privatised FE colleges are so renowned: "The college has no comment to make on this issue."

A Rougier and a vagabond

JAILED: Giannetto

■ **WHEN Julia Giannetto was found knifed and bludgeoned to death in her basement flat in Bristol on 12 September 1994, immediate suspicion fell on her estranged husband Robert. Their marriage had broken up in great distress, and there had been a bitter fight over custody of their small son.**

When Mr Giannetto was questioned it became clear that he could not have killed his wife. Parents and friends could testify that he had been looking after his son at the time of the murder and had no opportunity to visit his wife's flat.

The next day Mr Giannetto was released and Avon police pursued rigorous inquiries on the assumption that the murderer was a crazed psycho-killer. The murdered woman had been stabbed several times in a frenzy, and her head was nearly taken off with the final blow of the knife. Inquiries showed that in the days and hours before the murder there were several sightings of suspicious men behaving oddly in the area. One woman said that on the day before the murder she had been followed home by a man down the road in which Julia Giannetto lived. She had managed to get inside her home just in time to avoid him.

These inquiries came to an end when the police were approached by William Welch. Welch was rather sympathetically described by Mr Justice Rougier as "an archetypal rogue and vagabond". He is also a liar and crook with a long string of convictions. He specialises in hanging round pubs approaching lonely drinkers with a line of nonsense about his romantic past as an Australian mountebank and/or a mercenary in Laos. His aim is to impress on his acquaintances the hard times into which he has fallen in order to persuade them to part with money.

Welch's story was that three months before the murder — in June 1994 — he had met Robert Giannetto in Newport. The two got talking over lagers, and Giannetto said he was having trouble with his wife. After some time, Welch alleged, Giannetto offered him £5,000 to kill Julia by running her over. The men met on two subsequent occasions on both of which, according to Welch, the killing was discussed. On one occasion, he alleged, Giannetto handed him £500 in cash. He spent the money on drink and forgot all about it until he saw Julia's murder reported on television, remembered the meetings with Giannetto and contacted the police.

Avon police thought this story very significant. They took Welch under their wing, fed him and bought him drinks. Giannetto was re-arrested and never again released. He was charged with murdering Julia, and came up in front of Mr Justice Rougier at Bristol Crown Court in October 1995. The evidence against him included some diary entries made by Julia in which were recorded occasional threats and minor violence during the bitter arguments between the couple.

But the only substantial evidence against Giannetto was that of William Welch. The vagabond's evidence was full of absurd errors and contradictions about the dates on which he was meant to have met Giannetto, the meeting places, the payment of the money, etc, etc. Giannetto agreed at once that he had met the tramp, had found him mildly engaging and attentive, had given him a lift to Bristol and had met him again. But he utterly denied any suggestion of a contract to kill his wife. Nor was there any independent evidence to suggest such a contract.

By their questions to the judge before giving their verdict, the jury believed Welch's story. What did this mean? Mr Justice Rougier explained the significance: "Supposing you come to the conclusion that there was a genuine attempt to recruit Welch, but it fizzled out, if you stop the clock there, nothing happened. There has been a plan but she is still alive. What you have to be sure of is that her death, when it occurred, took place as a result of a plan, that is another plan, made by the defendant."

The jury found Robert Giannetto guilty. But how could they possibly have been "sure" that Julia was killed as the result of "another plan" for which there was no evidence? There was no evidence about the killer, who he was or why he killed, nor of any connection between him and Robert Giannetto. The only evidence of such a plan was quite different plan at a quite different time revealed by a criminal, liar and vagabond and denied by the defendant. Mr Giannetto's lawyers believe this is the first case in criminal legal history in which someone has been convicted solely because of an allegation of another quite different plan to commit the crime in quite different circumstances.

Such arguments were put to the Court of Appeal last year but the appeal was dismissed. Giannetto's solicitor Tim Rose has submitted powerful arguments that the case should be re-opened by the Criminal Case Review Commission.

Meanwhile Giannetto is in Wormwood Scrubs, still vehemently denying any involvement in his wife's death.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

SUSPICIONS that New Labour means Old Secrecy are encouraged not just by the ban on further revelations by ex-MI5 officer David Shayler, but by whispers that the Department of Timidity & Inaction may once again live down to its depressing reputation by not publishing the Guinness report into the 1986 Distillers takeover battle.

It seems there are those close to trade secretary Margaret Beckett who are against publication on the spurious grounds that it was all a long, long time ago; that no further action is likely to be taken against any of those named in the report; and no lessons need to be learned that the City has not already been taught. That argument may well have been further encouraged by the death last month of Ephraim Margulies — a key player in the illegal Guinness share support operation who escaped prosecution.

The siren sound of these arguments will be sweet music to those much closer to Labour than the Guinness suits and who feature in another still outstanding major DTI report — into Cap'n Bob's 1991 flotation of Mirror Group Newspapers. Commenced in 1992, that investigation, like the one into the Guinness affair, has been greatly delayed by criminal proceedings — against Kevin Maxwell and friends — which did not conclude until last year. However, the report is expected to be concluded within the next year! Also, like Guinness, the DTI faces the dilemma of how to "convict" or criticise in the report those who have been acquitted by the courts, were never prosecuted or featured in the scandal.

One answer to that dilemma is not to publish the report — a course taken years ago over the 60s collapse of Rolls Razor after its fraudulent founder John Bloom had avoided trial by a Levitt-style plea bargain. More recently, it was also the reaction to the failure to convict Victor Gray and most of his Graylaw crew who helped to bring down the Savings & Investment Bank and other companies.

A decision not to publish the Mirror report would no doubt be only too welcome to treasury minister Helen Liddell, a former senior Maxwell/Mirror executive, not to mention Lord Donoughue, the junior agriculture minister who was a well-rewarded adviser to the great pension pillager.

A decision not to publish the Guinness report would provide the alibi for taking the same decision over Mirror Group Newspapers. But that would be paying a very high price to cover ministerial red faces.

First, there is the cost of the longest ever DTI investigation. As far back as 1990, by which time an interim report had been gathering dust for approaching two years, the bill was £1,650,000. It is now expected to be at least twice that figure. Why should the taxpayer have richly rewarded the inspectors — QC David Donaldson and accountant Ian Watt together with his firm — and received nothing in return?

Second, there is the rewriting of history which has been going on since 1986. In the absence of the report, the revisionist version is in danger of becoming accepted as the truth. Former Guinness chairman Ernest "Alzheimer" Saunders and others who joined him in the dock are active revisionists. So too are those who escaped the courtroom but are still prominent in the City. As memories fade there is growing evidence that the Saunders version and that of his fellow revisionists is gaining credibility. No wonder "Alzheimer" wants to block publication ahead of any further appeal against conviction which is designed to open the door to a multi-million pound claim for compensation.

Saunders' central role in the illegal share support operation and the secret £25m in pay-offs made to the participants is documented in the report. The inspectors are believed to have taken a highly critical view of Saunders' actions, rejecting his fatuous claims to have known nothing and done nothing wrong. They are also understood to reject his denials of any participation in the £3.2m paid into his Swiss bank account by his boardroom ally and key adviser, American lawyer Tom Ward. Saunders claimed he "loaned" Ward the use of his account because Ward did not know any Swiss banks! Ward was paid £5.2m via a false Jersey invoice approved by Saunders. The £3.2m was later moved on into a Ward account in Switzerland. Ward also denied Saunders was to share in the money as the prosecution claimed at the American's 1993 trial at which he was acquitted. The prosecution case was that Saunders changed his mind once the share support operation became known.

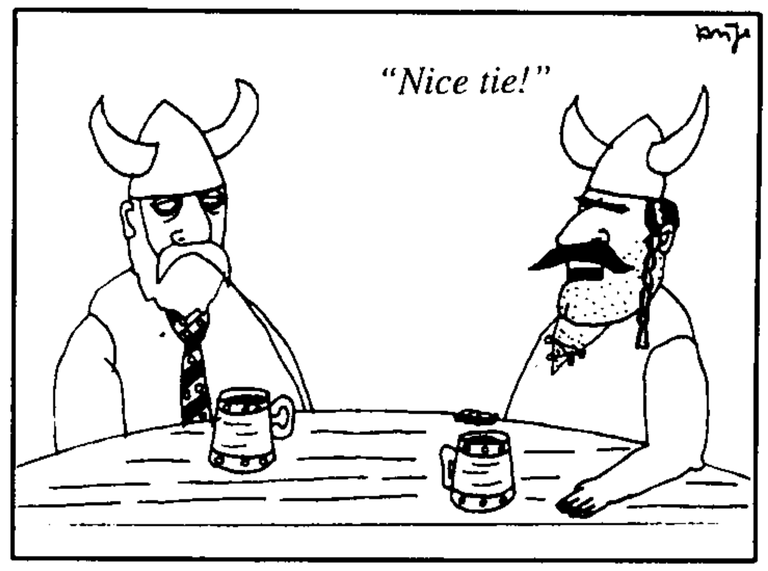
The DTI verdict on Saunders and his allies — men such as Gerald Ronson, Jack Lyons and Tony Parnes who have taken the "Alzheimer" route to Strasbourg and the European Court of Human Rights — would make any possibility of either a third appeal or compensation hard for the government to justify and for the public to swallow.

But it is not just the old lags who will not welcome the DTI's verdict. There are those such as Ward, former merchant bankers Roger Seelig and Lord Spens, and stockbroker David Mayhew who were acquitted or against whom charges were dropped. There is the now dead "Marg" and his son Ari who bought Guinness shares resulting in payments of £3.4m but were never prosecuted. Not to mention property man and friend of the famous Elliott Bernerd, who helped Seelig by recruiting his old friend Jack Dellal's sister as a Guinness buyer. The report may also clarify the disputed role of Jacob, now Lord, Rothschild in the affair. Influential men with influential friends who will no doubt argue the DTI should not publish so that they may be damned.

THE ROW between the British government and Montserrat over aid for the volcano devastated island has once again brought into the spotlight local lawyer and new chief minister David Brandt, who played a role the last time Britain lost patience with its Caribbean dependency.

That was back in 1989 when Montserrat had gained an unenviable reputation for providing fraudsters around the world with "brass plate" banks with which to fleece the unwary. By the time complaints from American and Canadian authorities in particular had forced Britain to take action, Montserrat was home to more than 300 such "banks". Most were closed down as a result of Scotland Yard being called in by the governor, who took direct action to kill off the banking business against opposition from local politicians who said the banks represented substantial income for the island.

Brandt was one of the more active lawyers



engaged in forming banks. It was estimated he had formed up to half the banks registered on Montserrat. He was one of the politicians who argued that Britain should pay to clean up the mess. A view rejected in London — which said Montserrat had ignored warnings about the banks.

Brandt denied any knowledge of the activities carried out beyond Montserrat by those who bought the banks he formed on instructions from clients specialising in marketing "paper" banks. Although interviewed by Scotland Yard, he was never cautioned or charged with any offences — unlike other local politicians who were accused of corruption. It is to be hoped the foreign office is not still harbouring a grudge over the bank scandal in Montserrat's hour of need.

HAVING sold, for a second time, a share stake in security group ADT — this time for some £170m to Tyco International — Michael Ashcroft has no shortage of time to devote to his new job as deputy treasurer of the Conservative party. How he will carry out that role and remain a tax exile resident in Florida and Belize remains to be seen.

Ashcroft's City reputation blighted an earlier bid to become treasurer. But with his old chum Lord Parkinson now party chairman the way may at last be clear. However, Ashcroft's departure from ADT has left not a few shareholders unhappy — and not for the first time. A detailed report in the *Wall Street Journal* explains why.

The greatest slice of Ashcroft's reward (£137m) came from cashing in share options, two thirds of which he was granted not long before ADT first became a bid target last year. These eight million options at a much higher price replaced three million "in the money" options on which he could have made more than £11m had he exercised them in February last year. A good call as the new options package is worth £40m more following the Tyco bid.

Ashcroft denies that he expected or had solicited a bid at the time he proposed this unusual option swap which must be true.

However, ADT investors whose shares only recently topped the levels of 1990 — when Ashcroft netted £21m from selling shares to the Canadian group Laidlaw in a deal it came to regret — see this as another case of Ashcroft business as usual. As the *Journal* put it: "Shareholders who have hung onto ADT for the seven years are just about even. Mr Ashcroft has made another fortune."

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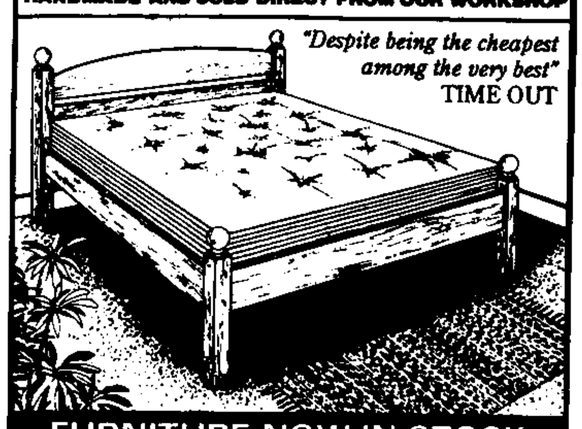

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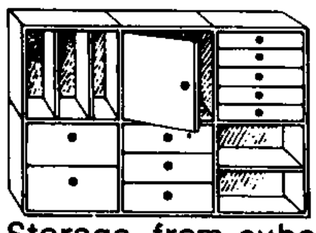

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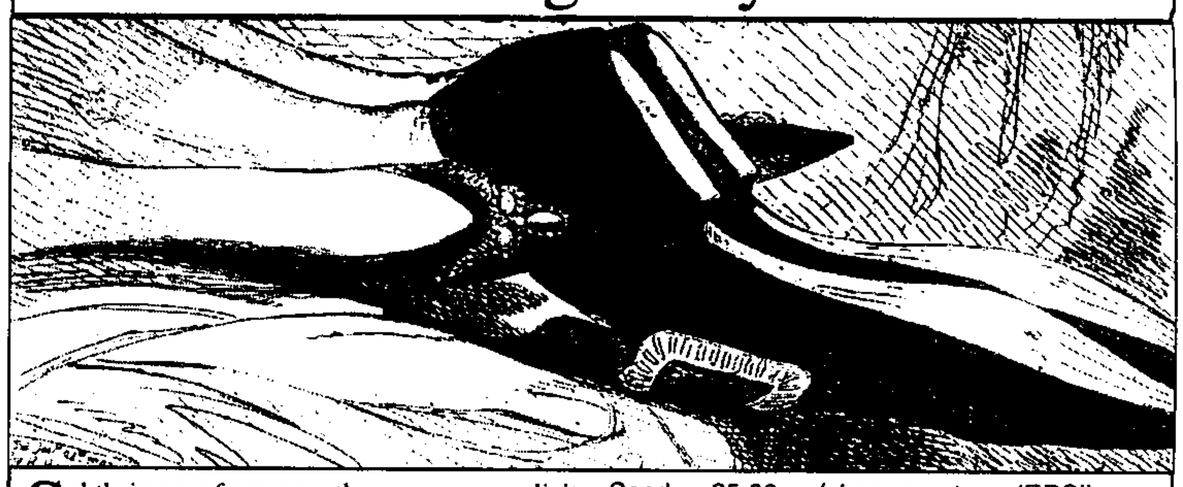

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1. Personal Information

Mr ❒ Mrs ❒ Miss ❒ Ms ❒

Surname: _____

First Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

_____

Post Code _____

I am seriously interested in meeting someone through Dateline.

Marital Status: Single ❒ Divorced ❒ Widowed ❒ Separated ❒

Age: Height:

Occupation:

Religion:

Build: Slight ❒ Medium ❒ Large ❒

Attractiveness: Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

2. Education

Private / Public ❒ Grammar ❒
Comprehensive ❒ Sec. Modern ❒

O Levels / GCSE's ❒ A levels ❒
Further Education ❒
University / Professional Equivalent ❒
Technical Qualification ❒

3. Your Personality

(tick which traits closely describe you)

❒ Affectionate ❒ Fashionable
❒ Serious ❒ Practical
❒ Considerate ❒ Conventional
❒ Shy ❒ Reliable
❒ Romantic ❒ Adventurous

4. Your Attitudes

(tick for yes, cross for no or leave blank)

❒ Do you involve yourself with community activities?
❒ Are you looking for one special relationship?
❒ Does your work make it difficult to meet new people?
❒ Do you want to extend your social life as well as finding a special relationship?
❒ Do you devote a lot of time to your social life?

5. Your interests

(sections 5. and 6. Please tick for a like, cross for dislike or leave blank for no preference.)

❒ Wining/Dining ❒ Jazz/Folk music
❒ Pubs ❒ Classical music
❒ Sports/Keep fit ❒ Theatre/Arts
❒ Politics/History ❒ Watching TV
❒ Reading ❒ Smoking
❒ Travelling ❒ Astrology
❒ Science/Tech ❒ Children
❒ Cinema ❒ Homemaking
❒ Pets/Animals ❒ Gardening
❒ Pop music ❒ Countryside

6. Details of your ideal partner

Minimum age: Maximum age:

Height: min. max. Don't mind ❒

Marital status:

Single ❒ Divorced ❒
Widowed ❒ Separated ❒
Don't mind ❒

Build: Slight ❒ Medium ❒ Large ❒

Attractiveness: Very attractive ❒ Attractive ❒ Average ❒

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